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LADY CLAUDINE;

OR,

THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE.

A DRAMATIC TALE.

BY DR. HORATIO W. NELSON.

CHAPTER I.

It is in an apartment of almost regal luxury and splendor that the first scene of our story opens. The room is lofty and richly painted—both ceiling and walls—with the most exquisite productions of the pencils of Florentine decorative artists; and the intervals between the gilded pilasters, that divided the beautiful walls into panels, were filled up with paintings that the creative genius of Claude Lorraine, Vandyke, Michael Angelo and Rubens had produced in their happiest hours of inspiration and of power. Statues too, both heroic and beautiful in construction, and that only needed the breath of life and the grace of motion, adorned the niches and corners of this noble hall. The tables, lounges and fauteuils were covered with cloth of gold, and beneath the feet was laid a carpet that seemed to the eye a bed of gorgeous flowers, and to the foot-fall gave back not the slightest sound. A soft, golden light mingled with rose-colored and orange tints from curtains of Persian floss, woven by wonderful art with figures of Peri sporting amid fountains, in paradisial gardens, filled the whole interior of this gorgeous room, which not all the gold of Golconda, nor the pearls of India, nor the diamonds of Brazil would have made more beautiful and glorious. If a simple peasant boy had been taken from his humble cot blindfolded, and transported thither in his sleep, he would, on waking, have believed himself in a dream; one of those beautiful dreams in which even childhood, and poverty, and ignorance are mysteriously visited, as if our souls had memories (wakeful only in sleep) of a former happy state in some unknown and beautiful place, ere they were born into this; and of which these delightful dreams are but broken and fragmentary recollections.

And, as if in such a dream, a peasant lad is now within this superb apartment, standing like a statue of wonder with clasped hands, lips apart and eyes wandering from object to object. He thinks he dreams. But he is now awake; but while he was asleep was taken from his rude home to awake and find himself here. He remains in this fixed attitude a few minutes, while the expression of his face, brown but ruddy with health and rustic beauty, is that of awe and bewildered helplessness. One moment he advances a step as if he would cross the room, and then draws quickly back his coarsely shod feet, as he sees that he is about to place them upon gorgeous pictures, inwrought with all the superb enrichments of needle-work, into the tapestried carpet which covered the floor. He had never before trod upon any other than the rude earth or green grass of his native plains: never before gazed upon pictures and statues. Loving women fair as Hebes looked down upon him from eyes that ever met his; and the snow-white marble forms seemed to him the actual presence of beings from the unseen world. Above his head the ceiling expanded, vaulted and azure like the sky, and shone with golden stars like those which rose and set over his native plain. Let us enter, before him, through a door ajar into an apartment rich with purple, enamel and gold, adjoining this gorgeous drawing-room. It is a lady's boudoir, and furnished with faultless taste. A subdued, dreamy, golden haze, rather than light, floated upon the level beams of the evening sun that pierced like arrowy lances the openings between the heavy Damascus silks, which curtained the windows in which bloomed glorious and strangely formed flowers of the most delicious perfume; flowers born and nurtured under a tropic sun, but which wealth and will had transferred to this English boudoir; for our story opens in Bath, England, and in a palatial abode, one of the most gorgeous and royally appointed in that city of modern luxury and pleasure.

In this elegant and comfortable little inner-room sat a lady of rare beauty. Her oval and aristocratic face was supported in her hand, which had the softness and semi-transparency of those beautiful hands one sees painted with a dainty pencil upon the purest ivory. The lady was not more than three and twenty. Dark as night was her hair, and her eyes were of the rich brown tint of the oak-leaf when it falls in autumn. The eyelids drooped over them like exquisite rose-tinted shells, and were fringed by long lashes that would have been black but for a bright chestnut-colored light that touched them goldenly.

Her attitude was that of one sad and unhappy; for peace does not always dwell in gorgeous halls, nor is the heart that beats aneath a velvet bodice always light and joyous. Tears were trembling in her eyes, and one by one dropped like falling gems and shivered into glittering fragments upon a burning diamond that glittered upon her bosom.

But she was not alone. The cause of her sorrow was apparent in the presence there of a dark man, who paced to and fro before the inlaid table by which she sat with her elbow supporting her head, and her hand cradling her cheek. He was well dressed, though as if just from a journey. He had a bold and resolute face, with large, handsome eyes, and a step and carriage thorough-bred and firm: yet there was a look of dissipation—of reckless dissolution—stamped upon his features that betrayed a soul within which had lost the dignity of independence and self-control, and was the slave of the passions of the body.

He was now in a high state of anger. Turning,



CAPTAIN OAKES BRINGING AN OLD SERVANT TO TERMS.

in his walk up and down the velvet carpet, he stopped full before the beautiful and sorrowful lady, and with fierce eyes bent upon her and a sneer upon his thinly cut upper lip, he said, sternly:—

"And you refuse, Claudine?"

Her only reply was an almost imperceptible shaking of the head.

"Love me?" he exclaimed, with ineffable scorn, "you love me! I have been mocked, and fooled, and blinded! Your professions of love were all false! If you cared for me you would spare me the disgrace that awaits me! You would make any sacrifice for me!"

"Anything, anything, Brinsley—anything, my husband, but to put my hand to crime!" she said, firmly but sorrowfully; and raising her brimful, tearful, beautiful eyes to his face with a momentary glance of fear and love blended with pity, she bowed her forehead upon her moulded arm and wept, with a profoundness of grief that would have moved the heart of any one that hated her—if one so lonely, and evidently so truthful and good, could be hated by any—but rather only loved by all!

Her husband's eyes did not catch that timid glance, for he had turned away to pace the carpet, biting his mouth with vexation. Again he paused abruptly before her.

"Crime? Is it crime for a wife to save her husband's honor? Ought not a woman to make any sacrifice!"

"Brinsley, so I would do, were it in my power to make any. I would make any sacrifice to save you in your present extremity!"

"Make it then! It is a mere scratch of the pen!"

"No, no! I cannot do forgery, even to save your honor, now so fearfully compromised by you—but I will not reproach you. I pity, and would aid you, even with the cheerful surrender of my life, could it avail!"

"You may have to sur——"

Here he checked his speech and colored highly, and then growing intensely white, he turned his back upon her and strove to say, with a laugh—and a strange laugh it was, but she saw not the face haggard and desperate from the bitter mouth of which it issued—"you may have to suffer—yes, suffer—I meant to say—if I am—am—hanged!"

The poor lady shuddered, but did not raise her head from out of her hand!

"Yes, hanged! Then, oh, yes, *then*, you would become a widow! young, rich, beautiful! Earls, and lords, and barons, would sigh at your feet—no! they would *not* sigh at your feet! Don't hope too sanguinely? They would not wed the widow of a hanged man! Hey, Claudine?"

"Brinsley, this is *too* much! I claim from you protection!" she said, rising and speaking with dignity, but shaking all over like an aspen-leaf, every nerve of her body unstrung and trembling with the keenness of the insult, not only of these words he had just spoken, but of others that he had uttered before we entered the boudoir.

"Protection? nay *I* claim it from *you!*" I have, in order to pay my losses last month at these hells of Bath, well named they are, forged your name to checks for thirty thousand pounds. They were debts of honor, due to noblemen with whom I play, and they must have been paid; for when debts of honor are in question, it is either *pay* or pistols placed at one's temples and a suicide's grave! Trusting to your love, your *love*, Cluadine—trusting to your clemency, I drew, in your name, upon your bankers. The drafts were honored! My debts of honor were paid! And lo! because again I drew in your brother's name, for eight thousand pounds on his banker, your own account being overdrawn, your resentment at my using your name and money without leave, leads you to refuse me aid, now that the money on the forged draft must be replaced by me, before your brother is aware that it has been taken out; and he will be sure to know it to-morrow, as that is the first of the month when he always verifies his bank account!"

"How could you risk your honor, Brinsley, so desperately? I cared not for the loss of my own money; I only regretted and mourned that you should have obtained it by a crime!"

"A crime, for a husband to use his wife's name?" said Captain Brinsley Oakes, with a sneer. "This is news to me!"

"I will not argue the point; I forgive you! and what greater proof of my love and forgiveness, than my assuming the signatures and shielding you when the presiding officer of the bank called on me the next day, with the checks, and asked me if I had really authorized so large a draft in your favor? Ignorant, as I was, of your having drawn at all, and alive at once to the peril you were exposed to if I denied the signature, I briefly answered him that 'I authorized the drafts,' meaning that *then* I authorized them, and so saved you from the further suspicions which his inquiring of me had showed me plainly had begun to exist in the minds of the bankers."

"Confound them! How dare they suspect a gentleman?"

"But the amount was so large, Brinsley—and then you know that——"

"Go on!—that I have the reputation of losing large sums at play, and being a spendthrift! The low fellows! to suspect a gentleman."

"Had they not reason, husband?" interrogated his wife, looking full in his eyes, with the calm gaze of virtue and truth.

"But it was only your name I used. Are we not one? I confess you acted nobly, Claudine, in not denying the drafts. It would have been a terrible affair for a wife to send her husband to a penal colony, or to a rope's end! But that matter of *your* drafts is now settled," continued the unprincipled husband; "I fear nothing now from them; but here is that eight thousand to be replaced to-morrow! There is the devil!"

"Your removal of so large a sum has left me but two thousand pounds on this quarter: these are at your service."

"They will not *do*, as I cannot raise the other six thousand! All these fellows, my friends, are so selfish that they will not loan. And the moment a man asks to borrow, he is at once suspected of being hard up; and this goes against him on the very face, you know! I expected to have won enough to have replaced it all before the forgery could be discovered; and I should have done so: but this death yesterday of the petty German Prince, in the gambling hall, by being run through the body by one of the gamblers, whom he assailed for winning unfairly his money, has closed them by the police for at least a week to come! You thus perceive, Claudine, that it is my misfortune, not my fault!"

The wife of this singular sophist, whose moral perceptions had been so blinded by vice as to enable him no longer to perceive the lines which separate innocence from guilt, raised her eyes wonderingly towards his face with an expression of sorrow and incredulity.

"Is it possible, Brinsley, you call that a misfortune which is a part of your guilt?"

"Do not lecture me! Once for all, will you sign your younger brother's name to this check, for ten thousand pounds? I have increased it two thousand as I shall need this overplus."

"No, Brinsley! *no!* Already you have forged my elder brother's name, and now ask me to cover your guilt and conceal your crime from the world by committing a like forgery for you of my brother Charles's name! Is it not enough for you, oh, is it not *enough*, that you are so deep in sin, that you wish to force *me* to the same crime!"

"But it is to save my honor—*your* honor too, and perhaps my *life!* Your brother, Argyll, despises me! His vengeance, were I in his power, would be sleepless! No, no! nor will I myself do this second forgery; for I am made coward enough of now, by this one that hangs over me! It is, however, imperative that it be done, and *you* must do it! Then if your brother discovers the hand that did it, *you* will not be harmed, and I shall be safe!"

This was said with icy, self-possessed villany. His cold, dark grey eyes watched the pale face of his noble and stately young wife. Evidently love struggled with honor and truth and duty in her heart; for with all his faults, nay his crimes, Claudine Oakes loved her husband still. Now it was love with fear and pity; but once it was love with trust and confidence. They had been married three years, and it was a match of love on both sides, for then she was not an heiress! It was a union of hearts, too; but, four months after their marriage, and while, as a captain in the army on half-pay he lived with her in good style in a neat suburban cottage, her father's elder brother died in India, where her two brothers, Argyll and Charles, had been with him from their boyhood, leaving to the three his immense wealth; but settling the portion bequeathed to his niece Claudine, solely upon her and her heirs; and in case of her death, to go to establishing a hospital and home for aged women and old men.

The sudden acquisition of such vast wealth caused a change in, or rather developed, the whole character of Captain Brinsley Oakes. He at once threw up his commission, and as his wife gave him unlimited command of her income, he became in less than a year the most marked man in London for lavish expenditure, for splendor of living, and reckless gaming. He threw it away rather than played it away, or expended it, and the result was that his wife's brothers, who now resided in England, so far used their influence as to prevail upon her to cease further permission for him to touch the principal and confine himself to the income, which was about forty thousand pounds a year. Of this income, we have seen, the reckless spendthrift had drawn, by forging her check, when she had refused to give it, more than thirty thousand pounds; and as it was in the first half of the year, so large an amount drawn so early in the season would embarrass them of necessity before its close.

Ah! happier would it have been for the fair young wife to have remained the joyful and loved bride of the "captain on half-pay," in their neat and lowly cottage near London, than to live as she now did in gorgeous halls at Bath, that vied with the magnificence of royalty. All this splendor was uncongenial to her retiring and loving nature, for love covets seclusion and flies from the saloons of splendor and the artificialities of the gay world.

Still she loved him, but with fear and pity—trembling in the secresy of her heart for the dreaded issues that must by-and-by come of such a career as his. Still she loved, and loving prayed for him! Counsel him she dared not, knowing that it would arouse his quick resentment. His love for her, on the contrary, was daily perishing; for the heart of the guilty and the unprincipled and the immoral man can contain no true love—for it flies from pollution and wrong-doing, its home is only in the bosoms of the upright and true.

"Brinsley," said Claudine, with emotion, "I cannot do this thing you demand of me! I can forgive you for forging my name, but I cannot do a crime!"

"Not to save my honor?"

"Honor saved by guilt? How can you mean this?"

Captain Oakes colored and was momentarily confused, but desperation lent him courage.

"But, *my* life? You know if I am discovered I shall be hanged, or sent to a penal colony; and rather than endure this I would blow my brains out!"

Claudine was silent. She was overwhelmed with distress. She perceived all the danger her husband was placed in.

"Brinsley, if to die now could save your honor and good name, cheerfully would I yield up my life! But do not ask me to commit a crime!"

"It is only your brother's name!"

"None the less criminal!" she answered firmly, but weeping.

Captain Oakes gave emission from his closed lips to a deep execration. He walked to and fro across the room, and then stopping before her, as she stood resting her hand upon the table, a graceful and beautiful impersonation of sorrow, said—

"I will do you the honor and give you the credit to say that I expected this! I know you are the soul of honor, though to woman perhaps this term does not apply. I therefore provided for this refusal! You say you will do anything to save my honor?"

"Yes, so that I do not lose my own!"

"We will see."

Thus speaking the gamester left the boudoir and entered the gorgeous drawing-room which we have described and where we left the young country lad, who was softly and timidly as he entered examining a marble group of the graces—the expression of his honest features showing that he regarded them as living creatures; for in the seclusion of his mountain home, neither painting nor statuary had ever entered into his dreams.

"Come hither, Reuben!" said the captain, beckoning to him.

The lad started with surprise, which emotion was changed to joyful recognition. He came forward and said, earnestly—

"Bee'st thee dead, too?"

"What do you mean?"

"Been't this 'ere heaven?"

The gamester smiled, and said—

"Yes. Come and see an angel."

He conducted the reluctant youth into the boudoir. Claudine regarded him with wonder.

"Who is this?"

"I will tell you! He is one of your brother Argyll's tenants! He is a keeper of his sheep on Salisbury Plains. Yesterday, as I crossed them, after my fruitless ride to borrow the money I need from Lord Palgrove, who, I find, is a man full of promises and falsehoods, I stopped, during a shower on the plains, in a shepherd's hut. I saw the door and the window all red-chalked over with the name of Argyll Heathcote, in exact imitation of your brother's writing. Surprised, I asked the shepherd who did it, and why it was done. He replied that your brother, one day visiting the place, had seen the shepherd's son writing with coal rudely upon a board. To encourage him he wrote his own name upon the door for him to copy, promising him when he had made a complete copy of it, he would give him a writing book and slate. The result was, Claudine, that the peasant had, by perseverance, got to writing the name as perfect as the copy set him. An idea at once flashed upon me; for you know that despair is prompt and inventive. I resolved to avail myself of this fact. I always, as you are aware, carry opium with me, so that I may have the power of leaving this world, when it becomes too hot for me, at any moment!"

"Brinsley!" exclaimed his wife, with horror.

"Nay, do not wonder at anything. I have got to be a desperate man. I staid over night, the storm continuing, in the hut, and managed to infuse a sleeping potion into some brandy, which I urged him to drink a little of. When I found him fully under the influence of the opiate, I stole off with him just at dawn, upon my horse, and secretly brought him hither, and placed him upon an ottoman in the reception hall. The lad has waked, and believes, from the splendor around him, he is in Paradise. And surely he is right, for you are an Eve most lovely."

"And you would tempt me to sin, Brinsley."

"Quite a compliment! I must be the devil, then, of this Paradise! But let it pass. This boy can write your brother's name as if it were his own signature; and, I believe, can write nothing else. Now, fearing your high notions of honor might lead you to refuse to do an act that might save me from destruction, I brought this lad hither. *This* was the idea that flashed upon me in the hut; and which I have so far carried out. Now it remains to reach the end I aim at. Here is the draft! Ink and pen are upon the table! As you refuse to sign it, all I demand is that you witness the signature affixed by the hand of this lad!"

"And wherefore?" and Claudine opened her eyes wide.

"That if I am hereafter charged with the forgery I can have proof to sustain my denial!"

"Brinsley, are you lost to all sense of honor?" she exclaimed, with indignant emotion.

"On the contrary, I am striving to preserve my honor."

"Its outward shape alone; for within I see it is all gone."

"Do you brow me to my face?"

"I must speak! I cannot be silent! I am overpowered with shame and anger."

"You refuse to sign this, once for all?"

"I do."

"Then you will witness that I did not sign it. Boy, take this pen and write the name you have practised so well!"

The lad tremblingly received the pen, looking from one to the other, bewildered and alarmed.

"Write here!"

"Not while I am present here, Brinsley; I can be no party to such mockery and crime."

"Nay, but you must remain, madam!" and he arrested her flight by seizing her arm as she was retiring precipitately from the boudoir. "Quick, boy! quick, and write the name. Place it there on that line at the bottom."

"Do not obey him, child! You will destroy yourself. You will commit a crime that——"

The husband covered the mouth of his wife by

placing the palm of his hand firmly over her lips, and with the other he fiercely motioned the boy to write. But terrified, he hesitated with the pen held in his hand. Captain Oakes then drew from his breast a small Italian stiletto, and menacing him with it, cried—

"Write that name, or you shall die!"

The lad, pale as death, placed the pen to the paper, when Claudine, extricating herself from her husband's grasp, sprang forward, dashed the pen out of the boy's grasp, seized upon the draft and tore it in pieces!

"Thus do I save you, poor boy, from a forgery, and you, sir," she added, fixing her eyes full and flashing upon her husband, "from a crime darker and more unprincipled than all others that have gone before."

"To defy me thus, woman!" he shouted, with the ferocity of a tiger. "Your own life shall pay the penalty!"

He made a half movement towards her as if he intended to bury the steel in her bosom; but suddenly arrested himself, as if prompted by some quick passing reflection, and returning the dagger to his bosom, he muttered—

"No—not now—not thus! You may thank yourself, madam, for this rage; but you have gone too far; you have presumed too much!"

"I could not and would not, sir, see this innocent boy involved, as I perceived he must be, if he signed that paper! Nor, sir, could I permit you to be the author of another forgery. What I have done I justify myself for doing; and would perform the same act again!"

"Madam, you will rue this hour!"

"Have you fallen so low, Captain Oakes, as to threaten a *woman*, and that woman your wife?"

"You may scorn me, but I am steel against all your sneers. For this, your work, just done, I will never forgive you! But, mark me: I will by some means have this money to replace what belongs to your brother Charles, though I were to go to the ends of the earth for it!"

Thus saying the defeated and foiled man turned away with a brow that might have matched that of Lucifer, when, with mingled hatred and despair, he looked back upon the gates of Paradise, out of which he had been hurled. He left the boudoir the incarnation of rage and shame; for he was not sunk so low but that he was keenly sensible to the humility of the exposure of his guiltiness before the immovable truth and unstained honor of his wife.

When the distant door of the saloon closed upon him, the wretched wife, whose hopes of happiness and peace she felt were now irrevocably wrecked, fell upon the seat from which she had sometime before arisen, and burying her face in her jeweled hands, wept bitterly.

As the departing gamester seemed to forget, in the tumult of his anger and the confusion of his defeat that he had left the shepherd lad behind, so she seemed in the depth of her grief that he was present.

He remained gazing upon her with wonder. Well might he be amazed, to find here, in a few brief minutes, more misery and guilt and sorrow than he had ever witnessed in all his life in his father's cot; for scenes so tragic—scenes where the profoundest passions of our nature are aroused as from the crater of a long-sealed-up volcano, are not known in the peaceful homes of shepherds, whose quiet days pass in peace and innocence. Reuben could not comprehend all this! Not only was he bewildered at being there, but alarmed at the incidents which passed before him. But what pen can describe the depth of wretchedness of the young and wealthy and beautiful wife. Only now was she fully assured that her husband, through his vices and the crimes to which he had recourse to sustain his credit, impaired by these vices, was lost to her forever! She felt she could no longer love a man who hesitated at no crime to patch up his false and rotten honor in the eyes of men! As well might one virtuous and highminded gentleman continue to extend his friendship and confidence, where he knew they were no longer merited on account of the crimes of his friend, as for a pure-minded, proud and honorable woman to continue to regard with love and trust a husband who had only done the acts of, but had not hesitated to acknowledge himself a villain! The dagger of shame and pride fallen, pierced her soul more sharply than the steel he had held above her bosom would have pierced her heart.

Suddenly, as if carried away by the impulse of her emotions she sprung to her feet, as if it were in a sort of phrenzy. The sight of the shepherd boy, his ruddy but honest face, which was full of wonder, and of pity for her, arrested her eyes.

"And he would have brought this poor boy into peril of his life! This was the basest act of all! Oh, Brinsley, how art thou fallen! Do you wish to go back to the plains and to your flock, boy?" she said, subduing her feelings and addressing him in a kindly voice.

"Oh, yes! I do not know where I be. I thought I was a-dreamin' and had comed up to the Queen's housen, everything looks so gold and beautiful like! But I know it beant the Queen's, coz the good Queen would na keep no such wicked folk there, an' ha' no such dreadful doin's."

"No wonder you don't think it the good queen's palace, poor lad, coming upon such scenes as you have just witnessed," said Claudine, with a heavy sigh. "Alas, if men are to carry from earth to Heaven such passions as they bring into palaces, it will not be any more Heaven to us, than this place of splendor is a palace to you. What is your name?"

"Reuben."

"You shall go home again! But let me ask you to make me a promise?"

"Who be you?" asked the boy, frankly and bluntly—but only the blunt frankness of a rustic, who has never been taught the conventionalities of artificial life.

"I am a poor lady, and live in this palace!"

"Poor?" and the boy's dark brown eyes wandered over the gorgeous apartments. "Poor, and all this gold and grand things."

"Yes. I am poorer than you are, Reuben; for you have peace and happiness. All my gold cannot buy these!"

"Who was that bad man, what was goin' to kill you? But I wouldn't ha' let him do it, though!"

"No matter who he is, if you do not know. What I wish you to promise me is, that you wont speak to anybody about it. Don't say you have seen or heard anything here? Here is a piece of gold. Keep it and buy your books; and don't any more write that name—Argyll Heathcoate. Will you promise?"

"Yes. I'll do everything you tell me to!"

"Answer no questions they may ask you."

"Who?"

"The people—anybody down stairs."

"May I ask how I comed here?"

"You were brought here in a carriage asleep. I will give orders to have you taken back again."

Here Claudine rang, and a footman in superb livery of gold and green responded to the bell.

"Stephenson, conduct this lad to the inn whence the coach starts that goes hence to Salisbury. Pay his passage, and see him off before you come away. He is one of my brother's tenants on Salisbury plains; and the coachman will leave him there when he comes to his home thereon. Now, Reuben, good evening; and remember your promise."

The shepherd's lad re-asserting in a round tone his intention to keep it, followed the footman from the boudoir, and with him took the direction to the servants' hall.

CHAPTER II.

"Well, what hind's son ha' ye there, Stephenson?" asked the steward, as the footman led Reuben, the shepherd's lad, past the door of this respectable personage's ante-room.

"A lad from my lady's brother's sheep cotes on the plains; who is to go in the post-coach home?"

"Ha, ho, he, ha! a beggar a horseback! Why I guess, lad, it 'ill be the first time thee ha' ever been hauled in a coach? What be thy name?"

"Reuben."

"A right honest Bible name, and I dare swear thee comest of honest parents. Sit down, lad, and take a mug o' kitchen brew. It'll no harm a hair o' thy head."

Reuben received the pot of ale which one of the servitors, at the command of the fleshy steward, gave to him, and being both hungry and thirsty, was refreshed by the draft, and sat wondering to see so fat a man, and at the gold lace on his collar and cuffs, and his crimson vest.

"Well, Master Stephenson, did you see anything goin' on up——" and here the steward winked and pointed with his thumb up stairs.

"My lady very much flurried!"

"I guessed so—I guessed so! The captain never goes out and mounts and rides off like John-o-Gilpin that way, but he's caught fire up there!" Here the thumb again was significantly bent back and upward. But it's not my lady. She is all goodness. God bless her! Bad ways the captain is falling into!"

"I've heard whispers!" said Stephenson in a subdued tone.

"More than whispers! But mum! We must not break the golden egg, man! The goose wont lay this freely always. It will come all to a head without our helping it along—and the later things blow up, the better for us, hey, Stephenson?"

"Oh, yes, sir. It is very odd how this lad came up there, and what they wanted of him."

"It is easy to ask him."

"So I did a coming down; but he is as stupid as an ass. He won't speak."

"Then is he more stupid, for Balaam's ass spake!"

"Very true—so he did! This fellow can say nothing but 'dun'na.'"

"Let's try the rogue! Come hither youngster! What wert thou doing up stairs?"

"Dun'na."

"What sent thee here at all?"

"Dun'na.'

"Out upon thy vagabond dun'na! What is that gold in thy hand, hey, what? Thou hast robbed my lady's purse! I'll have thee in quoin for a thief. Where got it?"

"The lady gave it me—not to tell," answered Reuben, as the steward shook him roughly.

"Not to tell! Tell what? Here it comes out, Stephenson!" and the fat steward winked at his particular friend and confidant, the tall footman. "What told she thee not to tell?"

"Dun'na."

"I'll dunnah thy throat with a grace cup, as the French valet hath it, if thou answer not!"

"No, good Master Steward, do the lad no violence. My lady hath placed him under my care; and I must see he come not to harm."

"Well, for thy sake, I will spare his life," answered the steward, breathing pursily, having lost wind by shaking him. "Get thee out of my sight, Dunnah, but give me the gold-piece, for, by my beard, thou hast stolen it."

Glad to escape from the terrible man, Reuben cast the gold-piece at him and fled; but instead of escaping, he found himself in the servants' hall.

"Stop the lad, dear Mary," called out the footman. "I am 'sponsible for him."

The servant maid addressed was a black-eyed rustic beauty, who caught Reuben by the arm as he was flying past her.

"What shall I do with him?" asked she laughingly, as she held him by both arms.

"Give him into my hands—I have got to go to the coach inn to see him away, by my lady's orders. It is already sun-set, and the stage leaves at nine o'clock. Come, my lad, I'll not harm thee. Mary, where is my hat?"

The maiden, whose heart had evidently been won by the footman, gave him his hat, and accompanied him out of the hall, as he led Reuben forth, leaving the rest of the servants gossiping mysteriously about the sudden and ferocious departure of their master, galloping off like a man bereft of reason.

"When, Mary," said Thomas Stephenson, the footman, as they walked together down the garden avenue in the twilight shadows, Reuben following on a little ways behind, contented to go now that he knew he was really on his road home, "when will you say you will consent to be married, and let us go and live so nice and happy in that pretty inn at Welton. I've saved up six hundred pounds."

"And I've got ninety, Thomas."

"That's jolly. I can rent the inn for seventy-six pounds a year; and furnish it, and we can get rich!"

"I don't want to be rich, Thomas."

"No?"

"I've seen by my lady, that riches an't happiness, Thomas."

"But it is only the captain's bad habits, not their riches that makes all so miserable here."

"Yes, my lady's miserable. He doesn't love her! She is getting afraid of him! I have heard—but—it is best to be silent."

"Yes. I've heard that he does not get all his money in an honest way."

"What, Thomas, not by highway-robbery?"

"No—not that! But that he cheats my lady somehow and throws dust in her eyes, and so robs her! But this does not become us to speak of—was that what you heard?"

"I was going to say that I *overheard* him, not many days ago, threaten her life!"

"Her life!"

"Hush, Thomas! not so loud! Yes. She refused to let him have her jewels to pawn for a great sum of money he lost to Lord Everby, and I heard him, for I was just coming in to give her a message, saying that if she refused he would take her life, and so possess himself of all the property."

"This is very bad, indeed; a very bad state o' things," said Thomas, shaking his head. "But we are now at the gate that opens upon the back street. Go forward, lad, I will follow thee on!"

Reuben obeyed, and after passing out of the gate turned in the direction of the principal street into which the lane led. It was now nearly dark, and the stars were rapidly showing themselves, one by one.

"One kiss here, in the nook of the gate, Mary, ere we part," said Thomas, tenderly.

"Dear sus! one would think you were going to Australia," said the buxom maiden, laughing, and denying to him with her lips the gift he sought, she granted it; for Mary had been so long betrothed to Thomas that she looked upon him in some sort as a husband.

While he held her to his heart a gentleman on horseback rode past the gate slowly. There was light enough to see that he was a military man of fine presence. The lovers shrunk back instinctively from his observation. But as they did so they saw a person on foot, muffled to the eyes with his cloak, dash rapidly past, and coming up with the rider seize the bridle and present a pistol at the head of the officer, cry, in a sharp, fierce tone:—

"Sir, your pocket-book or your life!"

"Heaven save us—'tis master's voice!" almost shrieked Mary, clinging with terror to the footman, who, so quickly and suddenly had the scene passed, was paralyzed with amazement; and the certainty that it was the voice of Captain Oakes, who was about to commit a highway robbery, made him tremble with horror.

"Neither the one nor the other, villain," answered resolutely the officer, switching his whip sharply across the face of the robber, and at the same grasping the pistol.

There was now a fierce struggle. The officer spurred his horse forward, trying to drag his attacker along the earth, and have him trampled under his hoof; while the robber exerted all his strength to pull him to the ground. The officer would have gotten the victory if the pistol had not been discharged in their combat of strength, and the ball entering the body of the horse behind the shoulder-blade, he fell to the earth, while his rider scarcely saved himself from falling underneath him.

With a terrible execration the officer rushed in to close upon Captain Oakes—for the highwayman was none else than this man of desperate fortunes—but the latter drawing his dagger, the same sharp steel which half an hour before he had nearly sheathed in the noble heart of Claudine, his wife, struck at him with full intent to strike him dead. At this instant he felt a hand upon his wrist which arrested his stroke, and looking round to see who interfered he beheld Reuben, the shepherd's boy, who hearing the noise of the combat had turned back fearlessly to witness it; and seeing a moment in which he thought he could prevent a murder, he did not hesitate to do what he could.

"You?—dare you?—How came you here, peasant?" he cried, between surprise and wrath.

The officer supposing that Reuben was an accomplice, and catching a glimpse of the affrighted footman near the gate, he retreated—being wholly unarmed—and leaving his dying horse to his fate hastened rapidly up the lane in the direction by which he had come.

"It is the captain who has run," said Thomas.

"No—the officer! Were ever two men so much alike in height and looks! Mercy! what a blessing neither is killed before our very face and eyes, Thomas!"

"He will kill that lad. No—the boy has broke away from him and escaped! Let him not find us here! Fly to the house, Mary! Oh, what is to become of all this! Our master turned highwayman at last! If I had heard it from the lord Bishop's own lips I would never ha' believed it."

"See! he has walked on! The firing of the pistol has alarmed the policemen beyond on the street! They have arrested him?"

"No, Thomas! I hear what he says! He tells them to pursue the lad—that he is the robber!"

"Let me go and see! I am responsible for him, Mary," and before she could exclaim or hold him back the footman—whose sense of his responsibility was greater than his courage—went down the lane to see what would be done; and if possible prevent so great an act of injustice. But before he came to the place, the police recognized Captain Oakes, and were told by him that the boy they had just stopped had attacked a gentleman with a pistol to rob him, and shot his horse dead. "There lies the horse, and you caught the peasant escaping. What more proof need you?" he said, haughtily, as if he would forestall all the least doubting.

Thomas saw them gather about the horse—a great crowd of people; and he also saw, without bravery enough to go to his defence, the poor shepherd's lad led away between two men, to be taken to prison. He also saw his master leave the place and proceed up towards the Crescent at a slow, cool step, and disappear.

The footman was afraid to follow Reuben; and wanted resolution to tell the officers he was innocent; as he would then be obliged to say who was guilty, and so implicate his master.

"Never in the world for my kind mistress's sake," said the honest fellow, shaking his head in great trouble. "It would break her heart to know of this evening's work. I must go back and tell Mary to keep the secret. She is discreet, and loves her mistress, and will do it. The boy Reuben, though, must not suffer. But how to study out his deliverance and not tell on the Captain? Ah, this is a bad business. Were ever two men so much alike? They might have been brothers! The officers will know that it wasn't the boy who set upon him. I will try and find who he is, and his evidence will clear the lad, even—yes—even if his description of the man who attacked him do fasten all eyes upon the Captain! If it's God's will that the guilty be found out—what am I to gainsay it. But alas the day for poor lady Claudine!"

Thomas stood in the dark covert of an oak in the lane while he was thus reflecting upon what he was to do. A hundred yards further up the crowd with lanterns were still gathered about the slain steed. He heard the name of "Colonel Stanley" mentioned by several of the people in a way that led him to think that it must be the name of the gentleman who was the owner of the horse, and who had been so fiercely attacked. At length the people dispersed, and the lane, an hour after the occurrence we have just described, was left in darkness and silence.

Thomas now stole back to the small postern gate with a heavy heart. He had seen enough that evening to make him sorrowful indeed; and how, moreover, shall he be able to meet the face of his mistress and not be able to say he had fulfilled her commands as to the safety of the shepherd's lad! But he found Mary awaiting him just within the gate; for she was too anxious about her lover's safety to go away until his return sound and whole.

"Is it you, Mary! Have you been here all the time?"

"Yes. I could not go away."

"Then you've not told anybody of what we saw?"

"Not a soul, Thomas."

"Then let us keep it a secret for lady Claudine's sake—not for his!"

"I would not for the world it should come to her ears! Oh, what a wicked man he has become!"

"And all for cards!"

"Yes; all for gambling and losing gold at his play."

"Poor lady!"

"Ah, yes! my poor, dear, poor mistress! But it'll be all found out!"

"They've taken up the boy Reuben!"

"And he has done nothing."

"No. But the Captain to save himself pointed the officers to him; and he told them that he had seen the lad, a tall lad, and proper, too, for a youngster of but fifteen, that he had seen him attack the rider and kill the horse by firing the pistol!"

"Was ever!" exclaimed Mary, clasping her hands.

"Never!" responded Thomas, shaking his head.

"And what did they do with the poor boy?"

"Dragged him off to prison."

"And didn't he tell 'em he was innocent?"

"I don't know; but what would his word be against the Captain's. Then they caught him running away from the place!"

"And didn't he run because the Captain would kill him! Why didn't you tell the officers——"

"Tell them what! That the boy was not the robber?"

"Yes. They would have believed you. Your brother is on the police, and you know them all!"

"But they would then say, If you know this boy did not do the robbery, of course, you know *who* did! Tell us then and we will let this boy go!"

"I did not think of that. What can be done! That boy shall not be hung."

"No, Mary! We must save him, if at the cost of the Captain's head—even at the cost of breaking our mistress' heart, to let her hear her husband has committed a robbery. These are two dreadful secrets for us to keep, Mary."

"Yes; and we must keep them till——"

"God's time comes to speak out. But how shall I answer for this boy to my mistress. Your wit is quick. Tell me!"

"Leave it to my woman's wit, then, Thomas! Dear me! how I tremble yet. Here comes the servants! They have just learned I suppose of the robbery; for if they had heard the pistol it would have brought them down long ago. We will take this side path and avoid them; for you want to answer no questions, Thomas!"

"Not I. Ah, that poor boy! To-night he will lodge in a dungeon instead of riding on top of the coach back to his peaceful home. Mary, to-morrow, you and I must put our heads together to plan this boy's deliverance."

The lovers now re-entered the palatial mansion of Brinsley Oakes, the gas-illumined windows of which revealed the rich dyes of the hangings and glimpses of the splendor and extraordinary luxury of the interior. A poor woman passed it, her bare arms laden with chips, gathered painfully on the skirts of the town to kindle her fire. She sighed as she looked up and beheld these displays of wealth, and wished she were the rich lady who dwelt there in such glory and greatness! From her window, Claudine saw her go by, and sighed, and wished, she were the poor woman, who each day sought food and wood as the birds of the air, to which God gives each day their nourishment for each day, providing for their morrow only when their morrow comes.

We now follow Captain Oakes from his fierce exit out of the boudoir to his mounting his horse at the door, and galloping madly away, spurred on faster than he spurred his affrighted steed, by his wild passions.

"I will slay her! She shall die by my hand! She shall ere another week ends! To deny me this, when my honor and name are at stake! The woman at length despises me! She means to wait and watch my ruin! Eight thousand pounds to replace to-morrow, or ruin explodes upon my head like a thunderbolt out of the heavens! Faster, faster! fly, Nevis, outspeed the wind! outstrip my thoughts! No—no! Did I ride the red lightnings, my thoughts, like demons, would ride with me! What—so! What is here! A tree fallen across the road! Where am I?"

He drew rein, hard and promptly, in time to save himself from being dashed against an oak that lay across the road. It had fallen at noon and was not yet cut through to be rolled out of the way. He found himself four miles from Bath; for he had given his horse rein when he left his own door, and so that he went forward he cared not whither. The halt here changed the direction of his thoughts, and led him to reflection. He turned round and rode slowly back towards Bath, meditating upon some plan to enable him to replace the money he had drawn on the forged paper. After conceiving and rejecting several modes which despair, rather than hope or reason, suggested to him, he was slowly riding into town, when he came upon two gentlemen on horse-back, who were halted in the middle of the road, and as he came up seemed to have ended a conversation; for the words of leave-taking were distinctly heard by Brinsley Oakes, and these words also:

"Be careful, my dear Colonel, of the pocket-book; for six thousand pounds in Bank of England notes is a large sum for a man to carry about with him."

"It is not the fashion now-a-days for highwaymen to cry 'stand and deliver,' my lord," said the one who was called "Colonel;" "but as I shall place it in a safe place as soon as I get to my rooms, I do not fear for its safety on its way there. The place you have bought of me, my lord, on which this is the first half payment, you will not regret possessing."

"It will make me a fine box for the hunting season. Good night. My carriage is in waiting at the Club; and I have a twelve miles ride home to-night. Au revoir!"

"Good night, your lordship," answered the colonel; and the two gentlemen rode off in opposite directions.

It was then just after twilight. Brinsley Oakes who had been riding slowly, had not been heard approaching by them; and he drew rein in the shade of a spreading oak, that reached half across the road, in order to listen. Now an honest man, whose conscience was clear, would never have thought of listening. Honesty lets every and anybody speak, and don't care a fig about overhearing. It rides right on, and right by, and pricks up no ears, for it neither suspects nor fears! But a guilty heart is full of ears and of eyes, too. It feels a nervous interest in every sound. It fears always—and therefore suspects. It conceives that what it does not understand, means evil towards itself. So, Brinsley Oakes sat in his saddle in the dark place beneath the tree, and listened to the conversation, which, as is often the case with country gentlemen, was in a louder tone, considering the subject, than need be, or than was wholly prudent.

His pulse leaped with guilty joy, and he clenched the fingers of his hand together with the grasp of a man who has firm hold of a deadly weapon.

"Six thousand pounds! And he carries it in his pocket-book! Bank of England notes—purchase money received to-day for land sold! He goes to place it in safety! Six thousand pounds will serve my turn with the two thousand Claudine has still in fund, and which she did promise me. But, shall I turn highwayman! It matters not! It is but a penny's toss—forgery or robbery! That pocket-book must be mine! Down conscience! If thou hast any life left in thee, after I have trampled upon thee so oft, this night let it die out! Thy weak voice cannot move me. I do this deed, even though blood flow! I am a desperate man! Let Claudine answer for the result. Hers be the guilt if I have to slay this man; for he is as powerful as I am; and, being a soldier, will not easily yield. Hers be the crime; for if she had let that boy sign, when Providence seemed to have fitted him for my own ends, I should not now be planning a robbery."

Thus did this guilty man reason; deceiving his own heart, and deluding himself, so distorted had his moral principle become, that his crimes owed their origin to others than himself. But, as in a camera natural objects are represented inverted, so truth's were reflected upon the mirror of his heart, upside down.

He rode forward, dismounted, and tied his horse to a post, and grasping a pistol which he was always armed with, followed the horseman, saw him take the lane in the rear of his own residence, and trot slowly along towards the Bath Crescent.

The reader knows the rest.

The highwayman, for such ought he now to be termed, after fastening the crime upon the innocent shepherd's lad, and having the satisfaction of beholding the officers of the law arrest him, hastened from the lane, and by a circuitous route, regained his horse and rode straight for his own street entrance, galloping into his court-yard openly, and with a noise purposely made to attract attention; as if to give the idea to his people that he had just returned from a ride.

He dismounted, and entering his residence, hastened to his own room, which he termed his library, being a gorgeous apartment, lined with gorgeous books in carved alcoves—books never opened; for the gambler has not ever repose of mind enough to sit down and quietly enjoy reading a book. His nervous anxiety craves for excitement, motion, company, talking. He can neither read nor think! For to do either he must be alone, and he fears—yes, fears to be alone! Silence and quiet give him the horrors! Play is like wine! Its votaries are miserable unless in a state of demi-intoxication!

Entering this room, he closed and locked the door. He cast aside his hat and coat, and standing for a few moments in the centre of the room, he said, with a defiant, reckless air,—

"What have I just done? Let me look the affair full in the face!"

CHAPTER III.

The highwayman being alone within his splendid apartments, shut himself up in the seclusion of his library, and tried to recall the guilty and dreadful scenes of the past few hours. He walked his velvet carpet to and fro, with his hand pressed upon his forehead, his face cast to the earth, dark, and gloomy, and desperate in its aspect. Evidently there was passing in his soul a terrible ordeal of mental torture; and as act after act of his criminal and dissolute career rushed upon his thoughts, he groaned aloud and beat his forehead with violence and pain.

Brinsley Oakes was a man, by nature and by profession as a military man, proud and haughty, and keenly sensitive to the external claims of what men call personal honor. But this sense of honor had no foundation in truth and manly virtue. Driven to desperation by his losses at play, he had no hesitation in forging his wife's name (trusting barely to her secrecy and to her clemency) lest what he called "honor" should be wounded! It was as if a man defiling his hands with pitch should wash them in ink, and say "am I not clean?" *Honor* with him and with men of his class in morals, was to have a fair name among gamblers, of paying his "debts of honor." He had no idea of any other sort of honor. His tradesmen's bills were left unpaid, and the money due to laborers unjustly kept back, but these trifles troubled not his conscience. He would not have forged to pay such matters up; but so long as he could forge undiscovered, he considered it a secondary degree of infamy, compared with not being able to pay Lord This, or Sir John That, or Major The Other, money lost in play.

The idea of detection alone troubled Brinsley Oakes now!

"And I have doubled my danger by this mad attempt to rob this man! Only the outward pressure of my desperate fortune could have led me to do such a deed, with the almost certain issue of being detected; and only the fortuitous presence in the lane of that peasant, whom I thought I had left in my lady's boudoir, saved me from suspicion; for I was besides the only man in the lane! The gentleman fought desperately. But he was a stranger to me and could not recognize me again, as I slouched my cap and kept my cloak about my face through all the combat. Here is his pocket-book, my prize! I will at least see that its contents reward me for the risk I have run!"

Here he took from the breast of his coat a long old leathern pocket book, such as gentlemen of substance use to carry, and which in the contest he had managed to snatch from the large coat pocket out of which he saw it protruding.

"It is well I secured this; but I have run great peril for it. One, two, three, yes, four, five, six, yes, all right! Six Bank of England notes for one thousand pounds each! and lo! what more! One, two, three, five hundred pound notes in another place. I am better paid for my freebooting adventure than I thought," he said, with a dark smile of—*not* of pleasure—but of self-contempt; a smile defiant and reckless. "I need but five hundred pounds more to be able to replace the eight thousand I drew in my younger brother-in-law, Charles Heathcoate's name. That five hundred! I am well rewarded for turning highwayman, and exposing my life, and myself also to becoming an assassin! It pays well. I begin to think it is better than forgery! How shall I gain this five hundred? Claudine has two thousand still undrawn! But I will not ask her! I am in her power now, and I detest her for her superiority over me—the superiority of innocence and honor over conscious guilt. I tremble in spite of myself, before her! virtue is power! A pure and innocent child possesses a mysterious power, before which satan with all his intellect would cower! So do I, in the presence of my pure and truthful wife. I hate her, therefore, because she makes me feel my inferiority; enables me to measure the depth of the descent I have made downward. No, I will not bend to her again to ask her for a penny!"

Here he traversed the room in thought, as if devising ways and means to enable him to realize the balance he needed.

"I have it! It is mean—but despair, when a man's honor is at stake, can be no chooser!" He rang the bell, which was answered by an African body-servant, a rare kind of domestic in England, and therefore fashionable, and only to be met with in the establishments of the rich and great. If intensity of sable in complexion, extraordinary brightness of vermillion in the tint of the lips, if magnitude of lips and whiteness of eyes and of teeth were advantages in favor of an Ethiopian valet, as being purely national, then this descen-

dant of Ham was one of the aristocrats of his race. He wore a scarlet coat, and buff vest, and green breeches, with a gold cord down the seam, while paste buckles sparkled upon his square-toed shoes.

With that low, obsequious bow, which can only be executed by a negro dependent, he entered the door and silently awaited his master's orders.

"Pompey!"

"Sar!"

"Where is Stephenson?"

"'Xpect, sar, him gwon down to de gardenum gate, sar, to see em horse, sar!"

"What horse?"

"Dead horse, sar."

"Oh, ah, yes! I know. There was a horse shot?"

"Yiss, sar!"

"Who did it, Pompey?"

"Dey say a young boy, sar; tryem to rob gent-'lem, sar!"

"I hope they caught him!"

"Oh yiss, sar! cocht him in de lane. Dey took him off to jail, sar. Dey say dat he'll be hanged, sar!"

"Go and send Stephenson here!" said the captain, so sternly that the African uttered a guttural exclamation "yah—yah!" and fled from the room.

"Pshah!" ejaculated in a more Anglo-Saxon manner, his master, after he disappeared. "I must not be so sensitive as to heed what I hear! I must come used coolly to hearing everybody talk about this robbery, and the fate that awaits this peasant lad! In all conscience I ought to feel remorse at being the author of the poor boy's troubles; first by bringing him off from his home for a purpose that wholly failed, nicely as it was planned, and now for accusing him to save myself from suspicion. I trust that I shall be more successful this time in making him useful for my benefit than I was about that signature, thanks to my wife! That woman! I have no patience when my thoughts recur to her. But here is my footman."

"Sir, did you send for me?" asked Thomas, opening the door but a little way, and peering in, while he shook with fear.

"Yes, come in, Thomas!" said Captain Oakes, assuming a cordial tone.

"Please, sir, if it is the same to you, I would rather stay here; my feet are muddy, sir, and—and——"

"Muddy! So I suppose you have been down the lane to see the horse that was shot," said the captain, as coolly as he could command his voice, and trying to appear indifferent. "I am quite vexed that such an outrage as has taken place this evening should have occurred behind my own grounds! I am glad they have arrested the robber, and I trust full justice will be meted out to him!"

Thomas stood staring at his master with astonishment impressed on every line of his visage. He had no idea that a man who was guilty of the very crime he then spoke of, could speak so composedly about the punishment of another. Knowing as he did, all the villainous circumstances of the transaction, and the crowning feature of his master's bold and heartless accusation of an innocent lad, he was filled with horror. Fear, at being so near so vile a man, prompted him more than ever to close the door and fly, not only from his presence but from his palace.

"Come in, Thomas! Why do you show so much fear? No one is going to rob you! This affair seems to have made a coward of you! Why, now you are as pale as a sheet!"

"Yes, sir, I dare say! What was it you wished me to do, sir?"

"Close the door!"

Thomas obeyed; for there was the habit of obedience which overcame his fear. He entered, but stood doubtful before the man whom he knew had become a highwayman, and had tried to do a murder, and to screen himself had imprisoned an innocent youth, friendless, ignorant and helpless, doubtless hoping to sacrifice him to secure his own personal safety. Thomas, therefore, felt not only in mortal dread of so wicked a master, but emotions of indignant hatred against him.

"Thomas, I wish you to do me a favor."

The footman was completely taken by surprise at the kind tone, and by the request.

"Yes, sir—of course, sir! What can I do?" asked Thomas, not knowing exactly what to reply.

"You told me on the first of the quarter that you had six hundred pounds laid by, and wished to marry Mary, and leave my service and go and set up a tavern at Welton."

"Oh, yes, sir, so I did; and if you would consent, I——"

"Not now. You are too useful to me; faithful and honest, as I believe. By-and-by you shall have all your wishes gratified and I can add something, you know, and make it a round thousand!"

"Indeed, sir, you are very kind—but—but—but——"

Thomas hesitated. He wished to say that he would not for all the money in London Mint touch a shilling of his coin stained with crime. But we do not always, from prudential motives, speak as we think, and the footman not being an adept in subterfuge could only end his sentence with hesitating "buts."

"But what?"

"Oh, nothing, sir—nothing at all, sir."

Captain Oakes fastened his sharp grey eyes upon the servitor's face with a scrutiny of quick suspicion, not that he had any idea that Thomas knew or guessed who did the robbery, but, as we have before said, guilt is always suspicious, even as cowardice is always timid.

"This six hundred pounds you do not make any use of, nor will you need it till the end of this quarter, when I will consent that you quit my service and be married; and I will give the pretty Mary a handsome wedding present."

"You are very kind, sir, but Mary don't like jewelry, sir, I'm sure! Indeed I heard her say she didn't like presents, and wouldn't have any—not—not even a ring from me, sir! Indeed, sir, she would rather not have the gift."

"Very well. Each one to their tastes. To come to the point, Thomas, I have a thousand pounds to pay to-morrow at ten o'clock, into the bank, and I am short of five hundred! It is too late for me to get it otherwheres, or I could draw on London! I have sent for you to ask you if you will loan me five hundred for a few days!"

"I—I—indeed, sir, I——"

"Why do you hesitate? Am I not a man of honor?"

"Yes, sir, but I—if it is the same to you, sir, would rather it should be drawing interest where it is! Six per cent, sir!"

"I will pay you ten per cent for it, then."

"But the person who has it, sir, cannot do without its use; and I've promised to give him two weeks' warning before I draw it!"

"Stephenson, I do not belive a word of it. Your money is in the Savings Bank—for you told me so not three weeks ago! You have lied to me!"

The footman turned pale, and cold sweat stood in drops upon his forehead.

"You cannot deceive me. I want your money! I will return it in ten days. I will give you my word in writing that I will do it. Here, sir, is ink! write me an order on the Saving's Bank for five hundred pounds. I will write out the bond!"

Captain Oakes seated himself at his desk and wrote a "promise to pay in ten days, to Thomas Stephenson," for five hundred pounds sterling, with interest ten per centum. To it he affixed his name, and laid it before the eyes of the servitor for him to read it. He then took a blank check and drew an order "payable to bearer" on the Savings Bank for £500 sterling.

"Now sign that!"

"No, sir! no, I can't, sir!"

"You *shall*, sir!"

"Indeed, sir——"

"On your peril refuse! Am I to debase myself so low as to ask my own footman to lend me a paltry sum of his hoarded money, to be refused? No, fellow! My pride now requires your signature, if no other motive! Here is pen—and here is ink! There is the order! All it wants is your name!"

Thomas was avaricious, and loved his hoarded silver. His heart was divided between the Savings Bank and the pretty Mary Mayflower; for such was the sweet alliteratum by which the fair maid was designated. He knew the full value of crowns and of kisses; and his affections were equally divided between them. Doubtless—little bravery as he had by constitution—Thomas would have fought as fiercely—on occasions—for his money as for his maiden. His knowledge of his master's character assured him that if he ever parted with his ownership of the five hundred pounds he would never see them again; and then he would have to abandon his marriage with Mary, and give up his perspective inn at Welton, and all his hopes for the future. He therefore began, under the pressure of these darkly-clouded thoughts and fears, to grow desperate. The quick blood was no longer quietly flowing in peaceful veins, but rushed through his heart, and leaped all red and fiery to his temples and brow.

"I cannot sign it, sir!"

"No?" interrupted Brinsley Oakes, in a voice of thunder.

"Indeed, sir, I can not! Indeed, sir, I will not! Your dare not threaten me, sir!"

"I dare not? What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say," answered Thomas, growing bold through desperation.

"Caitiff! is this the way you reply to *me*?"

"Yes, sir. Your are in *my* power if I choose!" added the footman, with that short-sighted policy and indiscretion which accompanies the desperation of cowardice, "you dare not threaten me!"

"Speak, sirrah! Out with it!" and the Captain seized him by the throat.

Thomas, with a sudden exertion of strength, released himself from his grasp, and flying towards the door shouted back:—

"I saw you attack the colonel and fire the pistol! *I* know all! I heard you lay it upon the poor lad!" Thus speaking out his mind, in a tone of sufficient triumph, the footman opened the door to rush out, but the African valet, who as in duty bound was listening, received him full into his arms.

"Hold him fast, Pompey!"

"I got um tight, massa Cap'n," answered the black man, winding his long arms about the form of the footman with the entwining fold of an ourang-outang clasping a tree. Thomas struggled vainly; for the negro had revenges to take for insults to his race from the servants' hall, in which Thomas was a participant. "Brack man hold white man enny day!"

"Drag him back! We have a matter to settle first. Lock the door, Pompey! Now, sirrah!" and the Captain's face as he spoke was as white and his eyes as cold as snow. "So you know my secret! You have sealed your fate, fool! Think you I will ever let you depart this room alive! No, no! Do not grasp him so tight, Pompey! Let him go! He can't escape me!"

Thomas stood shaking like a leaf. All his courage was gone. He saw at once how foolish he had been. He looked now for instant death, as he saw the captain take from a case one of his pistols and examine it. Impulsively he fell down upon his knees and clasped his hands imploringly.

"Oh, sir, forgive me! Do not kill me! I couldn't help seeing it! I was at the gate going out with that strange boy, when I saw you pass and seize the rein of the horse!" And the guilty man grew pale.

"So! you saw it all then? But how, fellow, came you to lag behind to see all this? for the lad was long before you!"

"Mary walked down to the gate too, and I stopped a minute to say a word to her, and then it was you passed, your worship, and all happened!"

"And Mary saw me?"

"Yes, your honor!"

"*Two* witnesses! The Fates are against me!" he muttered, walking to the window. "He says rightly,—I am in his power. I must be polite and cautious. Threats against him, or his death, would still leave one witness, whose love for him would soon enable her to guess who put him out of the way; and so I should plunge deeper and deeper into peril. No—I am environed enough with dangers! A mesh seems to be inclosing me! Thomas!" he said, suddenly turning away from the window and addressing, in a quiet, pleasant way, the fearful footman.

"Sir!"

"I see you know more than you ought, and Mary, also! Now, you must also know, that it is not safe for me to have such knowledge exist in any man's breast but my own!" I will not threaten you; but this I say, that if you or Mary whisper even to the winds the secret you possess, she shall perish! You know me well enough to be assured that I will stop at no obstacle to save myself. Hear me! Write me the order for the £500, and take my bond at thirty days. If I do not pay it, you are at liberty to spring this secret upon the world and have me hanged! Although you saw me attack this man, it was my desperate fortunes which prompted me!"

"I will lend your worship the money! Give me the pen!" said Thomas, satisfied that his own and Mary's safety hung upon his yielding. His eyes still beheld the pistol on the table, not far from his master's hand; and he feared to rouse again the terrible spirit which seemed to be momentarily appeased.

Thomas wrote his name unsteadily at the foot of the draft.

"That is well! You have now done me a good service, Stephenson, and I shall not forget it," said the captain, taking up the signed order and throwing down his bond upon the table. "Take that note! Recollect, if I suffer it to be protested, you may loosen your tongues; otherwise, remember, your two lives depend upon your secrecy; for I have means to reach you and destroy you with my vengeance, even from a felon's cell, should your tell-tale mouths place me there."

As the captain spoke he looked towards the Ethiopian significantly, and then beckoned him with a slight movement of his little finger.

"Is it not the truth, slave?" he demanded, with a dark, wicked smile, of the negro, before whom all the preceding interview had passed unchecked by the captain, as if the African were deaf, or a statue, or was so intimately identified with his master's interests that no secrecy was ever studied in his presence. It was the last supposition. The African was bound, body and soul, and will, to his master, who had, twelve years before, rescued him at the "Cape," where he was then stationed, from a death of torture about to be inflicted upon him by a hostile tribe, who had taken him prisoner in one of their feudal wars. As a dog follows his master, and licks the hand that beats him, and fawns upon the foot that spurns him, so Pompey attached himself from that day to his deliverer, with gratitude as deep as that which the man Friday felt towards Robinson Crusoe.

Twelve years had trained the imitative African into a civilized servant, with a broken knowledge of the English tongue. The will of his master was his own; and he would not have hesitated to slay promptly any man the captain commanded him to destroy.

"Yiss, massa! You ken do jis' wot you want to!"

"With your aid! This black, Stephenson, knows no will but mine. At a word from me that you and Mary were dangerous to me, you had better fly to Australia, or the farthest west, than hope to remain in England alive! Like a sleuth hound he would track you until he had brought you down. Injure me with this secret and fear *him*!"

Thomas drew back from the scarlet-coated savage in evident alarm.

"Please, sir, I will keep still, and so will Mary, for my mistress's sake!"

"Ho, ha! That is the motive! Well, I care not what it be, so you keep the secret; and let it not escape your recollection, that keeping it is to keep your neck; and, hark ye: if you betray it, you will put it out of my power to repay you your five hundred pounds.'

"If I might say a word for the poor lad, sir?" asked Thomas, on whose avarice this last argument was conclusive.

"The boy Reuben?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Leave him to me. I will see that he shall not suffer; but this depends on *your* secrecy."

"Be certain, sir, of me."

"Then don't concern yourself about him."

"May I go now, sir?" asked Thomas, sidling towards the door.

"Yes, but *beware!*"

"Indeed I will, sir."

And the next moment the footman had disappeared from the apartment.

The eyes of Captain Oakes rested upon the door out of which he went, fixedly and thoughtfully.

"So this thing is known—known to two! If they even whisper I am lost! But I think I can trust the man; but the woman! Can she keep the terrible secret? I must see her. But now I need rest of body and mind! I have got the eight thousand pounds at last, but with what torture and trouble of mind—and through what scenes with Claudine—and through what crimes have I come to possess it! But when a man has gained the summit, he should kick down the ladder by which he mounted to it. So I will not trouble myself about these steps taken! I will now try and sleep. To-morrow I will hasten to the bank and take up that accursed draft, which would ruin me to overlay till noon! How shall I then stand? Let me see!" and slowly pacing the room, he thus calculated his position: "There is the draft to which I forged Claudine's name, for thirty thousand! It is in the bank's hands; but she has acknowledged it, and I have, therefore, nothing to fear from that quarter! This one of Charles's taken up to-morrow, and I shall have no forged paper out! This will be one great weight off! Now, what secret fear is this pressing upon my soul? What further scrape am I in? Oh, this highway matter! By the rood! in my joy at getting the money, to take that forged draft out of bank, I forgot that I have a robbery on my hands! This looks uglier than the forged paper. With this advantage, the forgery, if it is not taken up to-morrow, is sure to be discovered, and I must either fly or pass the night in prison. But this robbery may never be discovered! I shall take good care that it be not! I would have locked this Stephenson up, and become his jailer, if it were not for this girl Mary, who would at once, on missing him, set up a hue and cry, and it would end in my being locked up. I must trust them for awhile. Now for sleep! Pompey!"

"Sar?"

"Lie down by my door outside!"

The guilty man, instead of seeking his bed cast himself upon an ottoman, first taking deep libations of an intoxicating draught, to make him fall asleep at once; for though he had the courage to commit great crimes, he feared to review them in the wakeful mood which precedes sleep in a guilty and troubled mind. The tendency of the soul to recall the incidents of the past day, and which the good man sweetly gives run to, for there is no remorse in his retrospect, this man resisted, or rather fled from, into the quick insensibility produced by powerful opiates. Ah, if such moments of wakefulness on the bed are not endurable by the guilty wretch, how can he meet that eternal night of wakefulness, where the worm of thought dieth not, and the fire of remorse is not quenched for aye?

Thomas in the meantime had rejoined Mary in her room, near the servants' hall. He found the domestics all assembled there, and talking still over the robbery. His pale and haggard countenance, as he entered, drew the attention of the steward, who seated in a broad arm-chair, with a mug of flip in his fist, was giving his opinion of the matter, in a magisterial way.

"Odds zounds! Why, master Tummas, thee lookest loike as if thee'd seen a ghost, mon!"

All eyes were turned upon him, and Mary hastened to him with looks of affectionate solicitude. As she came near him, he sunk down into a chair, and asked for water, saying he felt ill.

He shortly revived, and taking advantage of the hint afforded by the steward's words, he did not, he said, quite deny that he had seen a ghost; confessing he had seen and heard things dreadful enough for one man to have to come across.

"Dears bless us all! what be we comin' to?" exclaimed the butler, his great blue eyes popping quite out of his head, the robbery having first given them their outward tendency. "A ghost in the long passage, and a robber in the long lane! Times be bad, very bad!" and shaking his head, he took a long draught at the flip.

Thomas whispered to Mary, and they withdrew as soon as they could, when he made known to her all the particulars of the interview with their master.

"Now, what'll we do, Mary? My own wits are wool-gathering."

"Do? Why we'll have to wait the thirty days. If he then pays you, we have it then in our power to tell the secret, and save the lad. If he does not pay it we will do it, and so save him. Either way, he will come to justice, as he ought to do," said Mary, firmly.

"But mistress?"

"It will be no mercy to her to keep her ignorant. Already she is miserable. If he is arrested, it will separate him from her, which will be one blessing gained."

"That is true, Betty. You women are so ready to see clear through anything tangled. But then, if we tell what we know (I mean after I get my five hundred pounds back,) he will put us to death!"

"Not if he is in prison."

"But his negro will do his bidding!"

"Then the negro must at the same time be arrested, and both secured!"

"That is the way! I see it now! What could we do without woman's wit."

After some further interesting conversation of a more personal and tender character, the lovers parted at the door of Mary's apartment; and soon afterwards the vast mansion was buried in profound repose.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

TO BEL JOYCE—A CHILD,

Who gave me a Spray of Roses.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

White these buds are—white and fair
As the robes the children wear
Who die early. Sweet, I pray,
Be thy sinless heart alway
Whiter than a rose of May—
White as ever snow-flake fell,
Pretty, tripping, sunny Bel!

As the blue of summer skies,
Glorious are thine azure eyes,
Guarded by the golden sweep
Of thy lashes fair, that keep
Gentlest looks that ever fell
Out of human eyes, sweet Bel!

As the lilies with the rain,
So my soul ran o'er with pain,
Till this child's hand, soft and small,
Blossom-struck the gloom apart;
And this child's voice, musical,
Knocked at the pale gates of my heart.

While the deep pathetic cadence
Of this child's love wound and wound
Up the wild steeps of my sorrow,
Up! to sunlight, and the angels—
There it keeps me—joyance-crowned.

WHAT IT COST.

BY T. S. ARTH

"I am sure," said Mrs. Blair, speaking very earnestly, "that we are quite as able as the Perkinses to have a house of our own."

"That may, or may not be," replied her husband, evasively; and, as his wife thought, rather indifferently.

"Mrs. Perkins told me yesterday—I was over to see her—what a sweet little place they have!—Mrs. Perkins, as I was saying, told me, yesterday, that the house and garden cost them only two thousand dollars."

"I'm afraid it has cost them—or will cost them in the end—a great deal more than two thousand dollars," said Mr. Blair.

"More than two thousand! What are you talking about?" Mrs. Blair looked almost indignant. "Mrs. Perkins said that some people thought they had paid high for the property, though her husband considered it a bargain."

"A dear bargain he will find it in the end, or I am mistaken. Two thousand dollars make only a small portion of the cost."

"You are mysterious, Alfred."

"I do not mean to be."

"Well, you are. When a man pays a certain price for a thing, and comes into full possession of what he has bought, I can not understand how only a part of the cost has been met."

"A house and garden may be improved, you know. There is no end of expense, if a man chooses to gratify a liberal fancy, or even a moderate love of the beautiful. But I do not mean that."

"I should like, then, to know what you do mean?" said Mrs. Blair, almost pettishly.

"The cost of a thing," replied her husband, smiling at first and then looking serious, "is never truly estimated when set down at a simple money-valuation. There is always a cost beyond this; and sometimes it is largely in excess of the original estimate. In the case of Mr. Perkins, from all I have been able to learn, his house and garden will cost him a fearful price."

"Still talking in riddles," said Mrs. Blair.

"See! There is Mr. Perkins now!" And Mr. Blair looked from the window.

"Yes. So it is."

"He looks thoughtful," said Mr. Blair.

"He does."

"Even serious."

"Yes."

"Troubled."

"He has a troubled look. And that is unusual."

"Mr. Perkins was always a cheerful man until recently. But, to the two thousand dollars paid for his house, was added his peace of mind."

A shadow passed over the face of Mrs. Blair.

"Before he bought this property," continued her husband, "Mr. Perkins was getting along in his business very comfortably. But, the abstraction of two thousand dollars from his moderate capital, has thrown him into the money-market as a borrower, and now he has to spend nearly one-third of his time in devising the ways and means to get funds to meet his regular payments. He did not take this into the estimate of cost when he bought his house and garden. But even this might be thrown in and no great account made of it, if peace of mind had been retained. Alas! this was impossible."

Mrs. Blair did not lift her eyes from the floor to which they had fallen; and her husband continued:

"Mr. Perkins came into my store, hurriedly, at half past two o'clock yesterday, and said to me, in an agitated manner:—Pray lend me three hundred dollars until to-morrow! I have a note still in bank, and am short that amount. I can get the money from an Algirene in Third street at one per cent. a day, but conscience rebels at the unrighteous shave. I gave him a check for the sum he needed, and thus saved him from failure, or the Algirenes, as he calls certain Shylocks in the money-lending market. What do you think of that, my dear wife? This is simply a part of the price he is paying for his house and garden. Do you think he enjoyed either of them, on returning home, last evening? Or, that his wife found as much pleasure in his society as when they lived in a rented house?"

"He was a weak, foolish man," said Mrs Blair, "to take two thousand dollars from his business when he was unable to spare so large a sum."

"Just as weak and foolish as I would be were I to follow his example," replied Mr. Blair.

"A new view of the case altogether; and I think we had better let well enough alone," said the enlightened wife, who received a kiss from her husband as he left for his store that morning, which was more than Mrs. Perkins had received since her removal into the new house.

"I think," said a merchant, who had always sold Mr. Perkins on six months' credit, "that we had better limit the account of our neighbor around in Second street."

"Perkins, you mean?"

"Yes. To what amount do we hold his paper?"

The salesman referred to a ledger, and then answered—

"Four thousand seven hundred dollars."

"So much!" The merchant seemed surprised at the sum.

"He has bought more freely than usual of late," said he salesman.

"Don't let him add another dollar to his present indebtedness." The merchant spoke firmly.

"Is anything wrong?" asked the salesman.

"Wrong just this far: He is on the street, I hear, as a borrower, almost every day. It wasn't so a year back. He was then always to be found in his place of business, ready to meet customers. When a merchant changes into a borrower, you may be sure that something is wrong. Don't let Mr. Perkins have another package of goods until some of his notes are paid, and then sell him sparingly. You know how to manage that. If he will buy, put up the prices, to cover the extra risk."

"It shall be as you desire," returned the salesman, and, on that very day, Mr. Perkins was refused credit on a bill of goods by a house which had sold him freely from the beginning.

Surprised and troubled, he went back to his store in a depressed state of mind, to collect his bewildered thoughts, and see if he could get at the clue by which to unravel this mystery. "Something is wrong," he said to himself. "My credit ought to stand higher now than it did one, two, or three years ago. I have always met my payments; and my business is steadily on the increase."

But earnestly though he searched, Mr. Perkins did not search in the right direction. He could not find the clue.

"I hear," said another merchant, who had also been in the habit of selling him freely, "that Perkins has been showing signs of prosperity."

"Ah! I'm glad to hear of that," was replied by the individual to whom this remark was adopted. "What are the signs?"

"One is, the purchase of a house for his family."

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"A bad sign, for a man who is in the street every day for money, and whose notes are rarely out of bank until after two o'clock."

"Is this so?" asked the merchant, with a look of surprise.

"It is even so. I don't believe a day has passed, in the last three months, that he has not been on the borrower's list."

"I am surprised! Something, I fear, is wrong."

"I thought him hard pushed; nothing more," was answered. "But, if he is buying real estate, I am of your opinion that something *is* wrong. He has no surplus fund for that kind of indulgence."

"Then I must restrict his line of credit at once," said the merchant.

"You sell him freely?"

"Have always done so."

"A little wise caution may save you a few thousand dollars in the end; for if Perkins is going into the real estate business on his own account, in addition to his mercantile operations, he is bound to fail in time."

And so it was settled that Mr. Perkins was not in a safe condition. On his next visit to the store of this merchant, who had been enlightened touching the real condition of affairs, he was informed, in as delicate a way as possible, that the house did not, for the present, wish him to increase his indebtedness.

On the afternoon of this very day, Mrs. Blair happened to see Mr. Perkins in the street. The impression he made upon her, may be seen in this brief conversation with her husband:

"I met Mr. Perkins this afternoon," she said, as they sat at the tea-table: "and he looked ten years older than when I last saw him. Has he been sick?"

"He is sick at heart, I presume," answered the husband, gravely.

"What's the matter?"

"He has been making another payment on his house and garden, and it has strained him to the uttermost, I fear."

"I thought he had paid for that long ago," said Mrs. Blair, showing a natural surprise.

"He will never be done paying for it," returned Mr. Blair.

"The price was only two thousand dollars."

"Two thousand dollars! That is a trifle to what it has, and will cost him. I have not a doubt but he has paid half of that sum in exorbitant interest on money borrowed from day to day, to meet his payments, since the two thousand dollars were abstracted from his business to buy a house and garden. But more than that, a rumor to his mercantile discredit, arising from the fact that he is too constant a borrower on the street, has got abroad; and I learned to-day, that more than one jobbing-house, where his credit was good to almost any amount he cared to buy, have declined selling him any longer. His failure, I think, inevitable; and I am looking, every day, to see him break down under this crushing weight of a house and garden—shouldered ere he had acquired sufficient strength to bear the additional burden. Indeed, I should not be surprised to hear, that the crisis came to-day. He was twice in my store, almost begging for a few hundred dollars, which he might have had with pleasure before the purchase of his house and garden, but the loan of which I was compelled to refuse, because I did not think it a safe transaction. You say he looked badly?"

"Oh, yes! I never saw such a change in any one. He was walking hurriedly, with his eyes cast down. His face was pale and haggard, and his lips were moving as we sometimes see the lips of one partially deranged."

"Ah me!" ejaculated Mr. Blair. "I am afraid the worst has come, and that the heaviest of all his heavy payments has to-day been made on that unlucky purchase!"

It was, alas! as Mr. Blair had feared. Two important notes, signed by Mr. Perkins, were still in bank, on that day, when three o'clock struck its knell upon the wretched merchant's ears, and he went home a ruined man!

So much for the house and garden, that cost "only two thousand dollars." After being an eye-witness to this disaster, the causes of which were clearly seen, Mrs. Blair was satisfied to live in a rented house and let her husband retain in business the capital so essential to its healthy condition. A house and garden of their own would have been very pleasant, but, as it was impossible to figure up the exact cost of such an indulgence, she fully agreed with her prudent husband, that it was the easiest thing in the world for them to let well enough alone, until they were certain of their ability to do better.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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NEWSPAPERS AND RAILROADS.

It is somewhat remarkable, that these two agencies in the social and physical progress of the age —and they are the two mightiest—are, when they come before judges and juries for a hearing, too often subjected to a false and baneful prejudice. They stand, perhaps, better chances in the city than in the country, but in either case the courts of law would seem to conspire to curtail the essential liberties of both. No matter what the circumstances, where the individual prosecutes the railroad, the court naturally leans to the idea that corporations are rich, careless and insolent, and can afford to be found guilty. Besides, the people side with the same idea, and a judge with political aspirations will hardly refuse to consider this fact.

So, too, when a newspaper is prosecuted for libel—as many wrongfully are—though the editor justify himself by proving the absolute truth of all he has published, and prove, also, entire absence of malice, judges find it hard to charge in his favor. They are fond of the argument—"the press is a mighty engine, too apt to be careless; an engine which assumes undue and insolent prerogatives, and, therefore, gentlemen of the jury, it should be taught lessons of propriety and humility." In either case, railroad or newspaper, the court cannot be satisfied until it casts a reflection upon all newspapers and railroads.

We have in our recollection a libel case in which, by the showing of the plaintiff, he failed to make a case for want of identity of subject, yet, in spite of this and the complete proof on the part of the (editor) defendant of all the facts alleged by him, the judge charged against the press, on the ground of its proclivity to libel, and the jury, from respect for a custom which we cannot admire, shaped their verdict to the judge's charge. This was the more peculiar, since the judge instructed the defendant that he had only to prove the truth of his allegations, and absence of malice, to sustain his case.

Now the press must have reasonable limits, and certain established rights, or it must cease to be the great teacher and warner which its nature and genius warrant. If it cannot speak the truth in one instance, and comment fairly on the facts therein involved—facts, often involving the interests and safety of society—it may be fettered in every instance, where individuals only are concerned. It can no more pursue the robber, the forger, and the murderer, into the light, nor lash villainy naked through the world. The press, faulty and corrupt as it may be, is the noblest sentinel watching on the outposts of the nation and community, and over the humblest hearth. It spreads abroad, with electric speed, the words of intelligence and the voice of warning. It never can be greatly treacherous to the public good, for the support it receives is voluntary, and is measured by the intelligence and confidence of the people; therefore any fundamental prejudice against it is ungenerous, unwarranted, and false. It is to be hoped that judges and juries will ere long look upon it in this light, and aid, rather than hinder, it in its great and arduous work.

HARD TIMES.—A REMEDY.

"Really, the times are *so* hard," says Mrs. Spendall, "I don't know what we are coming to. Mr. Spendall looks as blue as indigo if I hint at money, and talks of nothing but failure and ruin. I can't understand it."

We understand it, Mrs. Spendall; you constantly carry the solution of the problem about with you. Your costly and innumerable dresses, your fifty-dollar handkerchief and collars, and your extravagant jewelry, plainly indicate what the trouble is. Then there are your wasteful and ungoverned servants, and your own idleness and spendthrift habits generally. No wonder your husband looks blue, and "talks of failure and ruin." You are enough to ruin any man. And if you would avert the threatening calamity, *go to work*. Discharge your servants, sell your gewgaws, retrench expenses, stay at home, make yourself useful, save your husband from "failure and ruin," and be happy—which you never can be while you are simply ambitious to rival other women as stupid as yourself, in senseless display and stupendous selfishness.

PREVENTION VERSUS CURE.

The familiar maxim that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is, as we verily believe, gradually gaining practical credence. In reference to the diseases of the body, we think we clearly see indications of this in our bills of mortality—not those of our own city, merely, but everywhere. While, for instance, the weekly reports of deaths in New York have latterly given as large a figure as seven hundred—which is large, notwithstanding the rapid growth of our city—they have also afforded social classifications sufficiently significant, with the aid of inference, to justify the hopeful conclusion with which we set out, viz.: that *the ratio of the dying to the living, among the better-to-do and more intelligent classes, is decreasing year by year*. This inference we are warranted in drawing by the casual statements of medical gentlemen of our acquaintance. Pointing to the great number of deaths among children, they have been heard to query, "Whose cases were these? I encounter very few of such in my practice, and my medical associates assure me that their experience is the same!"

Now, what are we to infer from these facts? Why this, that as newspapers, and books, and schools multiply, knowledge must increase—aye, and improve in its *quality* as well as its quantity. It becomes more practical too, and disseminates more and more information as to natural laws—the relation of the body and the mind to each, and their joint relation to the physical universe, with its unalterable laws of cause and effect, commonly enough, now-a-days, denominated Physiology, for everybody to comprehend its meaning, as we are trying to show an increasing number do its importance. Thus, as people become more intelligent, in this regard, they become wiser, and study to *prevent* disease.

A similar tendency is clearly traceable in the field of morals—a disposition to *prevent* pauperism and crime, instead of waiting to punish it. We wish we could see *more* of this. But there is already enough to make the philanthropist feel hopeful.

SYMPATHY WITH SERVANTS.

The tendency, all the while, is to change of servants; and the complaint is heard, in every circle, that good help is so hard to get,—that, when a good servant *is* secured—at intervals as long as those said to characterize angels' visits—she is sure to make her stay very short, &c. Meanwhile, the advertising columns of the daily papers are crammed with "wants" from both employees and employers, and the Intelligence Offices, where "choice family servants" are to be obtained, are crowded with candidates for situations and applicants for girls—which, by the way, suggests the question whether these places, whose name is legion, have not become "intelligence offices" in another sense, *i. e.*, places where Scandal holds her malign court, and works out some of the most disastrous social consequences?

Now, we think it altogether likely that the facilities for getting servants on the one hand, and getting places on the other,—which these middle men of the Intelligence Offices furnish—are working evil by rendering both mistress and maid too independent of each other for their mutual good. At any rate, we throw out the suggestion as a subject worthy the study of domestic and social economists, while we pass to what we desire to indicate pointedly in this article:—The *need of more sympathy for domestic subordinates*, on the part of heads of families. It may be well enough to prate of obedience to the good scriptural rule that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." But it does not fulfil the "whole law" of the relation under notice. No, no. Servant girls, far away from "home" and friends—separated from them, perhaps, by a wide ocean not yet underlaid by a magnetic cable—can not live by "bread alone," with even good angels. They need far more *sympathy* than they usually get. *It* would attach them to their "places;" it would convert merest eye-servants into trustworthy ones, and *pay* well in the end, thus proving a wise as well as a humane policy. Grumblers, suppose you *try* it!

THE PASSIONS.

The emotions of the mind, which are commonly spoken of as passions, without stopping to make nice distinctions between the different classes of emotions, or to gauge them by philosophical rules, were undoubtedly provided for by the Creator with a view to man's happiness. And the justification of the arrangement is found in the beatific tendencies of their legitimate play. Without them, social life would present the tiresome condition of a dead level, with no fears and no hopes—none of those varied alterations of which the human soul is capable, and which give vivacity and buoyancy to character. Divested of these mental motors, we should all become Stoics in the most practical sense —for what is the gist of the teachings of Zeno and his school, but the condition of moral insensibility, and therefore that indifference to pleasure and pain, which such a divesture presupposes. Clearly, it is nothing else.

It has strikingly been said that the virtuous man of the Stoics is like a ship in a calm—unable to move one way or the other—while the follower of Epicurus is like a vessel in a violent storm. Every moment he is in peril of being dashed to pieces, or being sunk to the bottom of the ocean! It is, then, to the proper control of our passions that we are to look.

What, but the cultivation of the graces of Christianity, can give a safe reliance for this result? What, but that which, as Hannah More forcibly observes, changes even the passion of our anger—against persons we dislike—into hatred of their *sins?* With a sort of divine alchymy, Christianity has so transmuted passions that have been working for evil, as to make them most active in the cause of Religion, and for the production of the virtues as its living fruits.

A PERNICIOUS SHEET.—The New York Tribune seems to revel in accounts of loathsome licentiousness. It lets slip no opportunity to parade in its columns the details of vice, colored and adorned with the wit and fancies of editorial imaginations which seem to glow with unusual and congenial lustre whenever immorality is the theme. This, perhaps, is not to be wondered at, when one takes into consideration the peculiar atmosphere which surrounds the Tribune editorial brain; but it is a matter of wonder that parents will expose the impressible minds of their children to the contaminations of such a pernicious sheet.

☞ The new story, "LADY CLAUDINE; *or, The Double Marriage*," which we commence in this number of the LEDGER, is one of the most interesting and thrilling Tales we have ever read. The installment given this week, though it is packed with highly dramatic interest, affords but a slight idea of the powerful and absorbing fascination of the entire story.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

TRIP TO THE CAATSKILLS.

NUMBER THREE.

It was very pleasant to see little children at the Caatskills; but they were all too few. Children are generally supposed to be bad travelers: this is a mistake. They have often more self-denial, fortitude, and endurance, than half your grown people. I can answer at least for one little girl under my charge from whom no amount of burning sun, —hunger, or fatigue—extorted a syllable of complaint;—in fact I once saw her endure a car-collision with the same commendable philosophy, while men old enough to be her father, were frantic with affright. Render unto children their due, is on the fly-leaf of *my* Bible.

Yes, it is good for them to go out of cities. A city child is a cruel, wicked, shapeless, one-sided abortion. 'Tis a pale shoot of a plant, struggling bravely for its little day of life in some rayless corner, all unblest by the warm sunshine which God intended to give to it color, strength, and fragrance. What wonder that the blight falls on it? Do you say, pshaw? Do you suppose a child, for instance, could appreciate the scenery at the Caatskills? I ask you, do all the *adults* who flock there to gaze, appreciate it? Do you not hear the words "divine,"—"enchanting,"—"beautiful,"—"magnificent,"—applied by them, as often to costume as to clouds? Give me a child's appreciation of such a scene before that of two-thirds of the adult gazers. Its thought may be half-fledged, and given with lisping utterance, but it *is* a thought. The eyes while speaking, may suddenly change their look of wondering awe, for one of elfish fun; what matter! The feeling was sincere, though fleeting—genuine, though fragmentary. By-and-bye that little child, leaving its sports, will come back again to my side as I sit upon the rocks; and any gray-haired philosopher who can, may answer the question with which she seals my lips; any poet who can, may coin a phrase which—more fitly than her's, symbols nature's beauty. Now she's off to play again—leaving the deep question unanswered, but not for that reason to be forgotten—no more than the rock, or mountain or river, which called it forth, and which is hung up like a cabinet picture in that childish memory, to be clouded over, it may be, by the dust and discolorations of after years, but never destroyed—waiting quietly that master touch which obliterating all else, as of trivial or unworthy, restores only to the fading eye of age, in freshened beauty, the glowing pictures of childhood.

The great charm of the Caatskills, is its constant variety; look where you may, you shall never see twice the same effect, of light and shade. Again, and again, I said to myself—how amid such prodigal, changeful beauty, shall the artist choose? Life were all too short for the decision. Ever the busy finger of Omnipotence, silently showing us wonder upon wonder. "Silently," did I say? Ah, no;—ever writing, on cloud and valley, rock, mountain, and river—"all these as a scroll shall be rolled away, but My Word shall never pass away."

I have not spoken of the lovely rides in the vicinity of the Caatskills, of which we were not slow to avail ourselves. Turn which way we would, all was beauty. And yet, not all—I must not forget among these magnificent mountains the hateful, bare, desolate, treeless, vineless, old-fashioned school-house, resembling a covered pound for stray calves. What a sight it was, to be sure, to see the weary children swarm out into the warm sunshine, shouting for very joy that they *might* shout, and trying their poor cramped limbs to see if they had not actually lost the use of them in those inquisitorially devised seats. Alas! what an alphabet might a teacher who was a *child-lover* have deciphered, *outside* those purgatorial walls, on trees, and flowers, and mountains; the teaching of which would have needed no quickening ferule, cramped no restless limbs, overtasked and diseased no forming brain. What streams of knowledge, waiting only the divining rod of the lover of God, and his representatives—*little children*—to freshen and to beautify wheresoever they should flow!

Yes—it was good to see those children kicking their reprieved heels in the air—I only wish they could have kicked over that desolate old school-house. *They* didn't know why I nodded to them such a merry good day; they never will know, poor victims, how royally well I sympathized with their somersets on the grass—they thought, perhaps, that I knew the "school-marm;"—heaven forbid—I would rather know the incendiary who should set fire to her school-house!

In one neighborhood—which is so small that an undertaker must be sorely puzzled to find subjects —I noticed a hideous picture of a coffin stuck on the front of a small dwelling-house, with a repulsive ostentation that out-did even New York. This, to an invalid visiting the Caatskills for health, (and there are many such,) must be an inspiriting sight!

This summer-travel, after all, is a most excellent thing. It is well for people from different parts of the country to rub off their local angles by collision. It is well for those of opposite temperaments and habits of thought, to look each other mentally in the face. It is well for the indefatigable mother and housekeeper to remain ignorant, for one blessed month, of the inevitable—"what shall we have for dinner?" It is well for the man of business whose thoughts are narrowed down to stocks and stores, to look out on the broad hills, and let the little bird's song stir memories of days when heaven was nearer to him than it has ever been since. It is well for the ossified old bachelor to air his selfishness in the genial atmosphere of woman's smile. It is well for the overtasked clergyman, and his equally overtasked (though not equally salaried) wife, to have a brief breathing spell from vestries and verjuice. It is well for their daughter, who has been tied up to the parish pillory of—"you must not do this," and "you must not do that," and "you must not do the other," till she begins to think that God did not know what he was about when he made her, to bestow so many powers, and tastes, and faculties, which must be forever folded up in a napkin, for fear of offending "Mrs. Grundy." *It is well for the Editor, that he may look in the faces of the women whose books he has reviewed, and condemned, too, without reading a blessed word of them!!* It is well for everybody—even the exclusives who hesitate, through fear of plebeian contamination, to sit down in the common parlor; because, were all the world wise—which heaven forbid—there would be nothing to laugh at!

FANNY FERN.

"I GREW THE REST."—A boy three years of age was asked who made him. With his little hand leveled a foot above the floor he artlessly replied—"God made me a little boy so high, and I grow the rest."

WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

We dropped in, a few days ago, at a restaurant, in the lower part of the city, where we were witness to the following agreeable incident:—

At a table on our left sat a respectable-looking old gentleman, with spectacles over a finely-chiseled Roman nose, doing justice to a "rare" sirloin-steak and a mug of ale, at which latter he ever and anon addressed himself with a long-drawn "hah!" of inordinate satisfaction. It was his taste to drink the ale, and ours, while waiting for our mutton and green peas, to observe him. When he had finished, which he did not till the last fragment of the sirloin, and the last drop in the mug, had disappeared, he rose, paid his bill, and was moving towards the door, when he observed a party of five—three males and two females—at a small table on the right. Though neat, clean, and moderately well-dressed, they had the unmistakeable air of immigrants just landed, and were evidently rather inconveniently short in pocket, for each was making the most of a cup of coffee and three small slices of bread of that wafer-like thinness for which our restaurant slices are in general so remarkable.

The old gentleman paused, ran his eyes through his glasses first at the various members of the group, then at their frugal fare, and then approaching them, inquired, with a smile that did one good to look at,—

"From England?"

The clear, lively flesh-color of their faces, or perhaps a something—the aspirated H for instance—in the murmur of their voices, as they conversed, might have led him to this supposition. But whatever it was, he put the interrogatory in a tone that indicated that he was quite sure it would be answered in the affirmative.

"From h'England," replied the youngest of the group, none of whom were over twenty-five, the respondent perhaps hardly yet twenty-one.

"Long landed?" continued, with his beaming smile, the old gentleman, who evidently comprehended the weakness of their finances.

H'about a *hour!*" returned the youth, with a modest blush that would have become a woman.

"I am from old England, myself," said the old gentleman, extending his hand as if to the whole party, and doubtless expecting them all to shake it at the same time. "I have just had an excellent beefsteak, and it was so good that I should be pleased to have each of you try one. It will," he added, with a smile that made us feel warmly towards him, "remind you of the good old steaks at 'ome!"

The group looked with blushing diffidence first at the generous stranger, and then at one another, as if while each yearned for the savory sirloin, neither had the courage—or the brass, if the reader will—to confess it and hoped some one would accept, in the name of all, the proffered hospitality. The old gentleman comprehended their feelings, called a waiter, and ordering the steaks, a good supply of bread, and a pint pot of coffee for each, wished the party "good fortune in America," and delicately put them at ease, by moving to the counter, paying the whole amount of their repast and departing.

We know not, of course, what shall become of those fine young immigrants; but whatever may be their fortunes, sure we are, from the dew upon their eyelashes, as he turned away, that they will ever feel warmly towards the generous, considerate old gentleman who put encouragement in their hearts, on the, to them, memorable occasion of their *first meal in America*.

TRIUMPH.

As from the dark unfragrant ground
The rose comes up all brightly red,
So from our sorrows for the dead,
Grows faith to shed its sweetness round.

Through trial—triumph must be soon—
The acorn in the earth is cast,
And dies to quicken, and at last
Feels out its way into the sun.

ALICE CARY.

REMEMBER HOME.

Fortunate—unspeakably fortunate, is the young man who has a home that he loves, and dear ones nestling there to whom his heart goes out in immeasurable yearnings of affection. The youth who has come to the city to seek his fortune, is guarded as by an angel from Heaven, when he carries fresh in his memory the picture of a humble cottage home which shelters the dear and venerated being who gave him birth. The thrill of her loving touch, as she laid her hand upon his head in blessing, ere he turned his footsteps toward the great city, shall hold him ever in the Path of Life, and charm the Tempter away. And still more blessed is he if he has to devote a portion of his wages to the support of that home, and of those dear ones whom he so loves. In such a case, his earnings are hallowed with a sacredness which communicates itself to his character, and is exhibited in blossoms of noble duteousness. The consciousness that the wages of his toil gladden, and beautify, and make comfortable, the home of his childhood, and the authors of his being, gives a dignity to his labor, and a delight in its rewards, such as no mere selfish spirit of acquisition can impart. Therefore, O ye young men, remember your paternal homes, and devote at least a portion of your earnings to the making of them brighter and happier, that your own life-path may be brightened by the effulgence which is ever radiated from good deeds.

DIVORCE.

Divorces are becoming alarmingly common. Not a week passes without chronicling from one to several "actions for divorce." Murmurs are becoming frequent against the stringency of the laws of this State upon the subject, which do not permit divorces for every petty grievance, whether real or imaginary; and it is stated that efforts will soon be made to reduce our divorce laws to the level of those of some other States. To any such movement we are inflexibly opposed. Marriage should be of more permanence than dicers' contracts or politicians' promises. It would be much better, perhaps, to have no divorce at all, except for criminal infidelity. Let people be held to the consequences of their own acts. The chief trouble lies in the hasty, inconsiderate and stupid manner in which marriages are contracted. A couple meet, take a fancy to each other, conceal all their faults, humbug one another for a few months, marry, find each other out, become disgusted, quarrel, and apply for a divorce. As long as people act from impulse, fancy, love, or anything else but reason and conscience, they will get into trouble. Of course there should be no marriage without love, but reason and conscience should approve of and coalesce with it, and then the union will be harmonious and profitable, and never be disrupted by divorce.

VENTILATION.—As each human being inhales about sixty gallons of air an hour, the necessity of attention to ventilation in close apartments is evident. Keep up the supply of pure and uninfected air as much as possible.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

LIBELERS are literary bravos, supported by bravos or illiterate cowards. If the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief, the buyer of libels is as guilty as their authors. As the reader of a slanderous journal would, if he had the talent, write what he reads, the maligner would become a malefactor had he the opportunity and the courage. He who stabs you with a pen would do the same with a penknife, were he equally safe from detection and the law.

THE mouth of a slanderer may be aptly compared to that of a volcano. The lighter portions of what it vomits forth are dissipated by the winds; the heavier ones fall back into the throat whence they were disgorged. Perhaps the aspersions of libelers may be more aptly compared to fullers' earth, which, though it may dirt you at first, only leaves you more pure and spotless when it is rubbed off.

A GOOD library is a precious catacomb, wherein are embalmed and preserved imperishable the great minds of the dead who can never die. In the library of the world men have hitherto been ranged according to the form, the size, and the binding. The time is at hand when they will take rank and order according to their contents and intrinsic merits.

WHAT are called the literati may be divided into two classes—those who live to study and those who study to live; the former tending to elevate literature, and the latter to degrade it. The first generally survive their own death; the last often die and are forgotten in their life-time, for that which is written for the day must expire with it.

IT has long been a question whether a man's diet has any influence upon his courage. We should like to see the trial made. Let a notoriously brave man, who has fed for a week upon hares' livers be brought in contact with a coward who has lived for a week upon lion-steaks, cooked upon burning lava and seasoned with gunpowder.

WE have just received two indifferent pieces of poetry designed for our paper, and addressed to distinguished men. We are at a loss to decide whether they are inspired by the cravings of an empty stomach, or the gratitude of a full one.

WE were happy to see, not long ago, a notice of the marriage of Miss Angelina Braham, a daughter of the great vocalist. We congratulate the bridegroom upon his privilege of reposing, even on earth, upon A. Braham's bosom.

An Irish gentleman having purchased an alarm-clock, an acquaintance asked him what he intended doing with it. "Oh," said he, "I have only to pull the string and awake myself."

AN ill-natured editor, a neighbor of ours, charges us with "diffusing ignorance." He condenses it. He usually condenses as much ignorance in a given space as if he worked with a hundred-ass-power.

A WESTERN editor says that he "goes for his country, tooth and toe-nail." Undoubtedly his teeth and toe-nails are a most formidable accession to the terrible collection of the implements of war in our country's arsenal.

WE think there is no wonder that we hear so much of the sorrows of love, since there is a pleasure even a dwelling upon its pains. Reveling in tears, its fire, like that of Naphtha, likes to swim upon water.

A TENNESSEE editor, while complimenting us, says that, in viewing our course, he has "a mathematical eye." Undoubtedly he has. His eye has the power of multiplication. It doubles everything.

A loafer left his wife in a great rage, telling her that he would never come back till he was rich enough to come in a carriage. For once he kept his word, being trundled home in a wheelbarrow.

"I never ask a gentleman for money," said a New England preacher. "Then how do you live?" inquired his friend. "Why, after a certain time, I conclude that a man is not a gentleman, and then I ask him."

"You are in bad health; your face is spare," said a friend of ours on meeting an acquaintance. "Very well," said the other, "if I am thin-faced you are double-faced, so that both of us have spare faces."

A BANKRUPT friend of ours was condoled with the other day for his embarrassment. "Oh, I am not embarrassed at all," said he. "It is my creditors that are embarrassed."

WE were once asked the question, "What is always ready and never wanted." If we were compelled by a court of law to answer the question, we should say, "*old maids*."

It is a fact, though perhaps not a very remarkable one, that some voices, generally very disagreeable, sound an exquisite music when they say "good-bye."

A father and son, Anthony and Thomas Screw, escaped on the 25th ult. from the Wetumpka jail. There are two Screws loose.

A PENNSYLVANIA editor speaks of the NEW YORK LEDGER as "*a* New York paper." It is *the* New York paper. It is the *definite article*.

AN Alabama editor, in a very swelling article, says there is but one being he fears. We suppose that is the "fool-killer."

A CONTEMPORARY of ours protests most earnestly that he is always as good as his word. No doubt he is, but his word is good for nothing.

An English paper, speaking of a very tall actor, says: "By Jove, he is tall enough to act in two pieces."

CURRENT ITEMS.

THE "Tampa (Fla.) Peninsular" proposes a Captain Simpkins, of the brig Governor Anderson, recently lying at that place, as the model go-ahead man of the age, as "he was down with yellow fever on Monday, attacked with the Asiatic cholera on Tuesday, dangerously ill with the small-pox on Wednesday, and transacted business in the city and prepared his vessel for sea on Thursday."

AN Ohio paper says that at the next session of the Legislature of that State a bill will be introduced prohibiting a clergyman from visiting a female member of his flock except in the presence of a third party. This measure is said to be set on foot by a few eminent clergymen who wish to save their profession from the possibility of scandal in this respect.

MARY CASTLETON, a beautiful girl of eighteen, living in Clinton county in this State, was not long since bitten by a pet dog. A short time afterwards the animal disappeared, and then the girl's parents became alarmed, and soon their worst fears were realized. Mary was seized with hydrophobia, and died after enduring unspeakable agonies.

A FINE boy of fourteen, named Herbert, living in Washington county, Penn., while attempting to disentangle his kite from the branches of a maple tree, in which it had lodged, lost his footing, fell to the ground, and was so terribly injured that he died in a few hours.

AN old man named Leonard Warbeck, living in Prince George's County, Virginia, was recently seized by a favorite horse that he was feeding in his stall, severely bitten, thrown down, and trampled to death before effectual assistance could be rendered him.

SHERMAN HINSDALE, a capenter, living in St. Joseph's county, Michigan, not long since accidentally cut off all the toes of his left foot with an adze. In a few hours his left side was smitten with paralysis, then ensued lockjaw, and then death.

A LITTLE lame girl was run over in Houston street a few days since, by a horse and buggy, driven furiously by a couple of fast young men. The poor child's arms and ribs were broken, and after suffering great agony for a couple of hours she died.

A SHORT time since, a returned Californian, named Nathan Scott, of North Adams, Mass., had some trouble with his wife, and stabbed her in five places, inflicting dangerous wounds. He then cut his own throat and died immediately.

LOUIS NAPOLEON has been heaping great favors on a certain American clergyman, who defended him against charges of debauchery and other bad conduct, while in this city many years since.

A FEW days ago an employee of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, named Hugh Maloy, lay down upon the roof of a car, fell asleep, rolled off, was run over by the train and crushed to a jelly.

A BOAT, containing three boys, was upset in the East River, a few evenings since, by coming in contact with a canal boat towed by a steam-tug, and none of them being rescued it was impossible to tell who they were.

THE Talladega (Miss.) Citizen gives an account of the recent marriage of a couple, whereof the bride was sixty-two, and the groom ninety-four years of age. They had not only arrived at, but *passed* the years of discretion.

IN Montgomery county, Texas, a boy thirteen years old, named Rossiter, being reproved harshly by his father, seized a rifle and shot him through the head, then fled from home, and has not been heard from since.

ISABEL.

BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

Lost Isabel, again I come
To linger and to weep
Above the spot where wild flowers spring,
To mark thy place of sleep;
And, as I kneel beside thy urn,
Dear memories from afar
Come o'er my spirit, like the wild
Sweet music of a star!

Thy breezy step is seen no more
Upon the blue hill's brow,
And beauty's early light has left
My darkened day-dreams now;
Yet my lone spirit keeps its glow,
Like that pale eastern flower
That shines at midnight with the rays
It drank at morn's first hour.

Thou wast the sunlight of my days,
The idol of my dreams,
And life with thee was like the lapse
Of summer's quiet streams;
And if beneath the storms of life
My spirit e'er was bowed,
Thy love shone o'er the gathering gloom—
An angel of the cloud.

There is no star above my head,
No flower beneath my feet,
No gentle murmur on the air
Where winds and waters meet.
No liquid lull of twilight founts,
No song from field or grove,
But tells me of the pleasant paths
Where once we loved to rove.

Alas! The hours no longer near
Young beauty's rosy crown,
The gentle flowers look up thro' tears,
The stars thro' tears look down;
From all the boundless universe
The soul of joy is fled,
To live, ah! never, never-more,
Since thou, sweet girl, art dead.

Dear Isabel, thine was the high
And holy gift of fire,
And beautiful its flashes played
Around thy glowing lyre;
But it consumed thy heart, for there
Its centered brightness fell,
And thou art but a thing of dust,
My own loved Isabel!

BION, THE WANDERER;

OR,

THE FAITHLESS GUARDIAN.

A STORY OF HOME, THE OCEAN, AND OTHER CLIMES.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "ORION, THE GOLD-BEATER;" "THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW;" "KARMEL, THE SCOUT," ETC., ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress, inthe year 1857, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Margery Grutt arose in the morning and helped Black Peggy prepare breakfast, and when it was almost ready she went to the foot of the stairs to call Cora. She called a number of times, but there was no answer.

"She must sleep dreffful sound this mornin'," she muttered, as she started to ascend the stairs. She gained the little bed-room, and had a sharp word of reproof upon her lips, when she saw the bed empty. She glanced quickly around, but no Cora was to be found. She looked under the bed, and in the closet, and was about to turn away to search elsewhere, when she saw a neatly folded note upon the little table. She took it up and found it to be directed to herself. She knew her own name when she saw it written, and she knew the value of figures; but she could read no more. She opened the note, and found considerable written there. The truth flashed upon her in a moment. She simply looked to see that the girl's garments were gone and then she hastened down, where, for the first time, she noticed that the outer doors were unfastened.

Margery stopped not for her breakfast, but having informed Peggy that she should be back in a few minutes, she put on her hood, and went out.

At the head of one of the piers was a fruit-stall, kept by an antiquated female who owned to having seen better days. Her name was "Old Moll," *alias* "Bumboat Moll," *alias* "Moll Bulpit," which latter name was, in all probability her true one, if we substitute the divine name of *Mary* for the plebeian "Moll."

Moll was already in her stall, having just lighted her pipe, and wiped the dust of her apples with an antique kerchief well plastered with prime old Scotch snuff; which snuff not only served to give the blushing fruit a fine polish, but also imparted a fragrance which purchasers, in their happy ignorance, greatly admired. Margery was one of a very select circle of intimate friends of the antiquated huckster, and as soon as she approached the stall the little side door was opened, and our ancient housekeeper was admitted within the bar, where there was just room enough for the two, the visitor occupying a space which had been cleared for a stove.

Old Moll was Margery's interpreter upon all such occasions as the present, and as soon as the latter had become seated she drew forth Cora's note.

"There, Moll—I want ye to read that for me."

Moll reached up to a box of figs over her left shoulder, and took therefrom a pair of iron-bowed spectacles, which she adjusted upon her nose, and then she opened the missive.

"Lawks! Wot a delikit hand! Who writ it?"

"Don't ye see at the bottom? Don't it tell?"

"O—yes. '*Cora.*' Well, well—let's see."

By dint of spelling out, and re-reading, and consulting each other, they arrived at the following solution, being something less than half an hour at the work:—

DEAR AUNT MARGERY—I am going to leave you; but I cannot do it without letting you know why I go. From you I have always received the kindest treatment, and I do not flee because I would be free from you; but because I would be with those who I know would love me. I know that if I stay here I must be sent away among strangers. If I stay another week I must be given to those who may never love me—who may take me off to a wild country, where I may be worked like a dog, and have no more chance to read and improve my mind. I know this, so I have chosen to leave you of my own accord rather than have strangers tear me away. But I shall always remember you with gratitude, and I will always pray for you. Your little CORA.

"P. S.—*After supper.* Since you have told me that poor Barney is dead I will tell you more. When Barney came to see Bion and myself, the last time, he accidentally heard a conversation between yourself and a man who had called to see you, (here was something scratched out so effectually that Moll could not make out even a letter of it. Cora had written—" *and whom you called Greenwood*"—but she feared to let them know how much she knew, so she obliterated it.) This man seemed to have a power over me which even you could not overcome. He was going to give me away to a man who was going off West, so that I should never be heard from any more here. And now, dear Aunty, I know you will not blame me. I should have been very sorry to run away from you, and leave you with nobody to love; but I cannot bear the thought of being torn from you and given away to a stranger, just as though I were a cat or a dog. You may tell the man who came to see you that I have gone a long way from the great city, where I shall have a good home. We may never meet again. If we do not, I do sincerely pray that God may bless you; and when you have lived all your life here on earth, may you be taken to Heaven, and be pure and holy with the angels. I hope you will be very happy, and be very good. CORA."

"Well, now," uttered Moll, as she read the last word, and had made the sense complete, "that's a perrty letter. It's got the perrtiest endin' I ever seed. How *com*plete she does tuck in the leetle bits o' feelin', don't she?"

But Margery could not answer. For the first time in long, long years, she was actually crying. Her heart was touched—deeply touched—and she felt sad and sorrowful.

"Don't say anything about this to anybody," she said, in broken accents, as she arose to go. "I'll 'xplain it all to ye sometime."

Margery went to her home, and it seemed a dark solitude. The bright face was gone—the face that for thirteen long years had smiled upon her every morning—and in her heart she mourned. She had not dreamed how hard it would be to part with the child. It cost her a pang to lose Bion a year and a half before; but then she had one sweet face left; but now only Black Peggy remained.

And then Cora's simple letter had touched her heart most keenly. She instinctively called to mind all the wrong she had helped to do her—forgetting now the old consolation that "if she hadn't done it, somebody else would,"—and she remembered how many times she had been cross and unkind. And yet she could not call up one hard word that had ever dropped from Cora's lips. And then the spirit of the letter she had left—so kind—so generous—so prayerful—and so loving!

Very fortunately for Cora's memory, Margery's anger was all expended upon those who had planned to take her away. It would be natural for her to have some ill-feeling on such an occasion, but Mr. Greenwood came in for all of that. She felt



MOLL BULLPIT DECIPHERING CORA'S LETTER FOR MARGERY GRUTT.

that he had driven the gentle girl away. She did not even blame Barney Driscol. In fact, she had not liked the idea from the first of having Cora taken away, and now that she had gone, she felt that she was revenged upon Greenwood. These, however, were only side-feelings at first, her direct emotion being one of pure grief at the loss of her "leetle darlin'."

It was very lonesome all day. When dinner was ready Margery had no one to call to come and eat with her, and her appetite was gone. She took but little food, at which circumstance Black Peggy was particularly pleased, as she thus received more than her usual share of the substantials. But Margery Grutt was not without consolation. She brought her old black case-bottle from the little locker over the mantle-shelf, and had Peggy go to the cellar on the corner, and get it filled with gin. And during the two following days, the old hostess imbibed more of the highly flavored fluid than she had drunk before for a month. It had the effect of soothing her sorrows, and she became more and more confirmed in the belief that "gin was a great thing for them as was in trouble."

Margery had no thoughts of going to Mr. Greenwood's. He had paid her all up to the time at which he intended to take the child away, and she concluded to let him find it out in his own time.

At the end of the third day Margery began to grow reconciled; or, rather, she had contrived to blunt her sensibilities so with gin, that she ceased from mourning. She did not get drunk, as that term is generally understood; but she filled herself to a state of brimming fullness, and thus she remained.

On the morning of the fourth day from Cora's departure, Mr. Joseph Greenwood made his appearance. He entered the house, and Margery handed him a chair.

"Well, Margery—how is the girl?" the visitor asked, looking sharply into the woman's face, to see what made her appear so strangely. But the fumes of gin quickly assured him on that point.

"Whar'r girl d'ye mean?" returned the hostess, thickly.

"Why—Cora, to be sure."

"She's a gone, sir—gone clean off."

"Gone? What d'ye mean?"

"I mean a'r'at the girl be gone—gone off."

"Gone off? Do you mean that you have sent her away?"

"No. I don't mean no sich thing," said Margery, speaking more distinctly as she became emphatic. "I mean a't she be gone—gone of her own accord."

"But where?"

"Aha—I don't know sir. I only know she be gone."

"But you know something," cried Greenwood, in alarm "Tell me what you mean."

At this juncture Margery happened to remember Cora's letter, and she thought that would give him the whole information more directly than she could give it in her own words. She pondered a moment, just to call to mind whether there was anything in the letter which she did not wish her visitor to see; but there was nothing she could think of, so she went and got it. Greenwood—when she arose—had expected to see her reel and stagger, but he was mistaken in his calculations. She walked very steadily, though with more care and precision than usual. She brought the letter, and placed it in his hands.

Mr. Joseph Greenwood read the missive through, and then looked back upon those words which had been erased.

"Did you erase this?" he asked, gazing into the woman's face.

"Erase?" repeated Margery, with a blank look.

"Yes. I mean, did you scratch out this?"—putting his finger upon the erasure.

"No, sir,—that was did when I got it. I found it on her table Saturday mornin', when I went up to call her to breakfast."

Greenwood got up and went to the window. He held the note in all possible ways, but he could not make out the obliterated words.

"Did you ever hear her speak my name?" he finally asked, returning to his seat.

"No, sir. How should she know it?"

"I believe she wrote it here. I am sure she did. You called me by name that evening. I remember it very well, because I spoke of it at the time. She knows my name. By heavens! there may be mischief in this! But how did she go?"

"She unlocked the front door, and went out that way, sir."

"I mean, how did she get off? With whom did she go? She did not go alone. She says in here that she will have a good home. Now, where is she?"

Margery Grutt was very sure that Cora had gone off with Bion and Jack; but she was determined that this man should not find the poor little girl if she could help it. If she told of Bion, Greenwood might, in some way, find out where he had gone, and thus find Cora. So she said—and she told the truth, too, as far as her real knowledge was concerned:—

"I can't tell ye, sir. I had no more idee of her goin' away 'an I had of runnin' off mesel'. Who she did meet with, or where, I don't know."

"Margery Grutt—if I thought you had anything to do with this—if I thought you had helped the girl off—I'd—I'd—"

"Well, sir,—an' what would ye *ide*?" cried the woman, with sudden anger and contempt. "Jest tell us what ye'd do, will ye?—for I'd reely like to know."

"I'd make you suffer for it—that's what I'd do!" replied Greenwood. "I am not sure yet that you are free from complicity in this matter."

"I don't know what you mean by *complicedy*, Jo. Greenwood; but I'll tell ye what I do know:—I know ye came to me jest thirteen year ago, an' axed me to take yer leetle *sister*, an' I——"

"*Sister!*" gasped the man, turning suddenly pale, and quaking. "What d'ye mean by that?"

"Ye fetched her here, an' axed me to take her, and call her *Cora Page*. Ye wanted me to bring her up to think she hadn't got any parents a livin'. Ye wanted me to take her, and to teach her as she shouldn't never dream who she was. I promised ye I'd do it, and you promised to pay me a certain sum of money for mesel', and a sum for her. You've done your part an' I've done mine. I've done every p'int honestly an' truly. The leetle thing don't know who she is; and how she came to clear out you know now as well as I do. And now—Mr. Jo. Greenwood—I advise ye to keep yer tongue to yersel' if ye can't keep it civil. Tell me any more o' yer stuff an' I'll put ye out o' the house first—an' then put ye in jail next! Ye know now!"

Mr. Greenwood was completely nonplussed. He was like a rat in a trap: uncomfortable enough, yet with a fair prospect of gnawing his way out if he kept quiet; but if he made a fuss he would be very sure of being detected and destroyed.

"Be easy, Margery," he said, after struggling with himself for some moments. "I had no thought of making any disturbance; but I tell you, this comes hard. Now tell me—don't you know anything about where Cora is gone?"

"*No, sir!*"

"But haven't you some clue to the person or persons with whom she went?"

"I've told ye once 'at I didn't know anything about it—and I don't."

The man arose and paced the floor several times. He was deeply perplexed, and seemed very uneasy. He finally stopped at the window and looked at the young fugitive's letter again, trying to decipher the words which had been scratched over. He held it again in all sorts of positions—looking through it from the front and from the back—holding it to the light and from the light—but all to no purpose. He was sure he could make out a capital G, and if such was the case, then the whole word must have been *Greenwood*. And if this was so, then she must have known his name. The thought troubled him; and yet he tried to believe that she would never try to find him out.

At length he handed the missive back to Margery, and then took up his hat.

"You will promise me one thing," he said, earnestly:—"You will let me know if you hear anything from Cora."

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. I will see you again. I must go now, for the man who was to have taken her away is waiting for me. He is to take the next conveyance for Albany. He is going on the canal. He will be disappointed."

"He wont be any more so than I was," said Margery.

"Very well. I'll call again. And, in the meantime, if you can gain any intelligence of her I will pay you well for it."

Margery grunted out some common-place reply, and Mr. Greenwood left the house.

In an hour from that time Margery Grutt was gathering up her effects. All things of value which she thought would sell she brushed up and cleaned; while smaller matters, of clothing, plate, and so on, she packed carefully away in her trunks. Black Peggy was informed that she must find another home.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ANOTHER GRAVE.—STARTLING INTELLIGENCE.

Christopher Huntley sat in his counting-room alone. He looked downcast and worn. His eye was sunken, and his cheek was pale and wan. His friends told him that he was laboring too hard; but he only shook his head, and said he could not live without work. At four o'clock a carriage drove up to the door of the counting-house, and the merchant took his seat therein. He was set down at the door of his own dwelling, and the carriage was driven away to the stable.

As Christopher Huntley entered the great parlor, where he went to rest a few moments, he bowed his head and groaned.

"How still!" he murmured to himself. "Oh! where are the songs and joyous notes that once made my home bright? Alas! they were mine but a few short months! Oh! how gloomy and silent!"

And so it was. The parlors were dark and cold, and throughout the whole house not a sound above a human whisper could be heard. Servants came there blithe and gay, and in a few short days they grew dull and silent. There was something in the very spirit of the place that banished all joy and gladness from the heart that came to dwell beneath that roof. Once the merchant brought home a pair of birds. He had heard them singing most merrily at the office of a hotel, and he bargained for them at once. He thought their sweet notes would enliven the atmosphere of his home. He hung the cage up in his sitting-room, and the birds never sang again! They drooped and failed, and in two weeks died!

Mr. Huntley had been sitting in the parlor only a few minutes when a woman from above came and told him that Mrs. H. wished to see him. He arose and went upstairs, the woman following him. In the front chamber he met his wife. But she was not the wife he had married years before. From a blushing, singing, laughter-loving maiden, she had grown to be an old woman. She was only three-and-thirty, but she looked nearer fifty.

The merchant gazed into his wife's face, as though he would read there an answer he dared not ask for. His heart sank lower as he met the sad look that was turned upon him.

"James is very sick!" she said. "I am glad you have come. He has been asking for you. He wants to see you very much."

Christopher Huntley made no reply, but followed his wife into the rear chamber, where his boy lay.

James Huntley had been a bright, intelligent boy, and had given promise of being an ornament to the sphere in which he should move. His brow was high and full; his eyes large and lustrous; and his features, before his sickness, had been cast in a mould of perfect manly beauty. But he was pale and wan now, and his features thin and sunken. His skin was dry and crisp; his pulse low and weak; and his breathing heavy and laborious.

The boy put forth his wasted hand as his father approached, and a faint smile passed over his face.

"I am glad you have come, papa," the young invalid said, in a tone just above a whisper, "for I wanted to see you."

"You knew I should come, my dear boy," returned the merchant, bending over and kissing his child.

"Yes—but I feared you might not come soon enough. I have been very low, dear papa—very low. Oh! I could not have gone without seeing you."

"But you shouldn't think of such things, my child. You must get well. You must get well, and laugh and play with me again."

"You know I cannot get well, papa. I shall not live long. I know it. I can feel it. But you will be happy after I am gone, won't you? Mamma," the boy added, turning to his mother, "let me talk to papa alone a few moments."

Both the parents were somewhat surprised at this request; but the mother quietly withdrew.

"Now, papa," said James, "I want to tell you how much mamma suffers."

"She suffers because you are sick, my child."

"No, no,—not wholly, papa. She suffers because you are so unhappy. You never smile now as you used to, she says. She didn't complain. O, no,—she was pleading with God to make you happy. When I am gone she will have no one but you to love and bless."

The merchant covered his face with his hands. He had been sad and silent—he knew it. But how could he be otherwise? How could he be otherwise when that low, plaintive voice of the past was continually sounding in his ears, and falling upon his soul? He saw another little boy—a boy as bright and as good as his own dying child. He remembered that boy's mother. He remembered her dying words to him:

"*As you keep your faith with your dying sister, so may God do unto you! Do I not thus ask God to bless you?*"

Oh! how many times had Christopher Huntley repeated those last nine words to himself!

"Papa—you will make mamma happy when I am gone, won't you?"

"Yes, yes, my boy."

"O—I am glad of that, because I know she is very unhappy now."

At this point the invalid closed his eyes with a groan of exhaustion. In a few minutes more the doctor was announced. He had been there twice before during the day. He examined his little patient; and after this the father followed him down to the parlor, where he was motioned to a seat.

"Doctor," said Mr. Huntley, anxiously, "can you tell me what is the matter with my child? Is he not going exactly as the others went?"

"Yes, sir," replied the doctor, thoughtfully. "His case is exactly like theirs."

"And what can you make of it? Do you think it is consumption?"

"Well—as for that—it is consumption, plainly enough, sir; but not such consumption as we generally meet with. When your girl died, some two years ago, I did not analyze her case so thoroughly. I knew her sickness was just like the sickness that carried off your first boy; but I examined no further. Now, however, I have made a more thorough diagnosis, and I am satisfied that the disease is not a regular consumption. The children seem to be healthy until a certain age. When about four years and six months old the disease comes on. Have you, or any of your progenitors, had any complaint, or idiosyncracy from which this could come?"

"Not that I know of, sir," returned the merchant, with a slight tremor.

"Well," resumed the physician, carefully, "it may seem foolish in me to say so; and some might call me *non compos*; but I must say that I believe there can be cases of *fatality* in a family—cases where some unseen and unknown force may work to certain ends. Answer me this: Were you ever worked upon by any strange fear or phantasy, before your children were born?"

"Why do you ask that?" uttered Huntley, while a fearful shudder shook his frame.

"I will tell you: Among the possibilities of mortality we have not only inherited disease from constitutional causes, but also a strange disease which seems to come wholly from the imagination of the parents. I have heard of the case of a Scotch woman whose children were carried off by a disease which no physician could account for. She lost six children—one after the other—all dying at the age of three years, or within a very few days of it. The parents were both healthy—*their* parents had been healthy—and in no way could the strange fatality be accounted for. Finally, at the death of the sixth child, the mother confessed that about a year before she was married an old witch had assured her that she should have children, but that never one of them should live to be three years and a month old. This thing she had kept secret, and it had preyed upon her mind; and every child had lived to be three years old, or very near it, but not one to three years and a month!"

"And can you believe such a thing as that?" asked the merchant, succeeding, by a mighty effort, in speaking very calmly.

"Why—I do not disbelieve it," returned the doctor. "The more I see of human nature, and the more I study physiology and its relations with psychology, the more I am convinced that many of the strange things we have been in the habit of looking upon as fabulous, may have had some foundation in truth. I tell you, that future generations shall find natural laws that we have never dreamed of. I know that the child may be very palbably, directly, and seriously affected by the mental state of the mother, even to disease and physical deformity. Then why not fatally? Ah, sir—the mysteries of this little life of ours are not all opened to us yet."

"But," said the merchant, speaking too coolly for one who spoke naturally, and showing plainly in his face the emotion he sought to hide in his speech, "of course no mental hallucination of the father could affect the child."

"O, yes. Yes, sir—the father may entail upon his offspring other troubles than mere hereditary disease. It would be a curious study for you. The laws that govern the relations between mind and matter are just beginning to claim attention. Heretofore mind has been looked upon as a sort of airy nothing—as only a medium between the soul and outward things; while matter has been considered as a gross affair which could only be operated upon by the direct physical forces. But now we know better. We know that the mind has an agent which will work for it, and which can even operate upon ponderous, extraneous bodies. It has been demonstrated that there is a subtle, electric fluid, passing upon the nerves as the electric spark traverses the wire of the battery; and that this fluid will obey the mind simply at the beck of will. It is a curious subject, sir—very curious."

At this moment the nurse came down in great haste, and announced that the boy was dying! Mr. Huntley and the doctor hastened up, and found the boy with his head upon his mother's bosom.

James looked up as he heard his father's voice, and put forth his hand.

"Don't weep, papa," he whispered. "You must feel that I have gone home to God, and that one day you will long to meet me. I think I am good. I have always tried to be good. And I know you are good. Don't weep when I'm gone, papa. If your heart is pure, and your soul is free from sin, you must be happy in the thought of our meeting again in Heaven! Make mamma happy!"

Those were the last words the boy ever spoke on earth! He nestled more closely to his mother's bosom—he put one arm about her neck—and thus breathed his young life away!

* * * * * * *

There was a new grave digged by the side of the other. To save appearances Christopher Huntley had had his two children, already buried, placed by the side of, or very near to, the grave of the first boy he had seen buried.

It was a cold, bleak afternoon on which the funeral procession entered the place of burial. Christopher Huntley looked pale and wan, and his wife wept bitterly. When they arrived at the new grave the little coffin was set down. It bore upon the plate—JAMES HUNTLEY—*Aged four years and ten months!*"

There was more upon the silver tablet; but it was this upon which the father dwelt with terrible emotion. That first white stone—the one put up over eight years before—bore the same number of years and months!

When the services were ended, Christopher Huntley turned his eye for the first time upon that oldest grave. He started, and the first expression of fear quickly gave place to a look of anger. An old woman was upon that grave. She looked old, for she was wan and wasted, and her hair was silvered. She was poorly clad, and as the cold wind swept over the place she shivered beneath its influence. Her eye met that of the rich merchant; but she did not quail. Her look seemed to say, she had a right to be there.

As the procession began to move away the merchant found an opportunity to gain the poor woman's side.

"Why are you here?" he asked, in a low, harsh whisper.

"Why are you here?" she returned.

"I came to bury my last child," he said.

"And I came to bury my first and last over again," the woman responded. "If *you* remain quiet, I shall!"

There was too much meaning in these words for Christopher Huntley to dare the woman further; so he turned away and rejoined his wife, and soon gained his carriage.

The great house seemed darker and more gloomy than ever now. The merchant sat down in his parlor, and when he was left alone he began to reflect upon the life he had led. He had gained wealth; he had gained position in society; and he had gained the name of a leading merchant. So much of his ambition had been answered. But what had he gained to offset this? Ah! how his soul quaked when he thought of that!

"What's the use?" he uttered to himself, starting from his seat, and striding up and down the long parlor with noiseless tread, as the soft carpet drank up the footfall. "Why should I bother myself about that now? It's done and gone! Others have done it before me, and I know they lived as men should live. The boy is dead long ago! Ha! I'm glad of that. Had the Aldebaran been my own ship, and the whole cargo mine, I'd never have given the loss an uneasy thought since *he* went to the bottom of the ocean with her! Bion is dead—dead and eaten by fishes long ago! I had no hand in his death. He went to sea—went as others go, and was cast away. I was his guardian—made so by law. And I am the legal heir to all the property! What have I to fear? Nothing!"

Awhile longer the merchant paced to and fro, and then he stopped near the center of the room. His hands were clasped, and his eyes bent to the floor.

"Why did he speak those words! '*If your heart is pure, and your soul is free from sin!*' I wish he hadn't said so. These words will haunt me! What could have put them into his head?"

The merchant's reflections were cut short by the entrance of a servant, who handed her master a card. He took it, and read—"BARRABAS LATTIMORE."

"Show him in," he said to the servant. And then, when he was alone, he added—

"O! I hate the sight of that man. I wish some kind fate would cut him off! He has lived long enough!"

At this point in his reflections the door was opened, and the attorney entered. He looked worse than ever. His face was sharper—his skin darker; his nose more hooked—his cheek bones higher—his eyes more red and fiery—his hair more crisp, yellow, and sparce; his fingers longer, more bony, and dirtier; and his clothes the very same he wore eight years before.

"What's been going on?" the visitor asked, as he took a seat.

"What do you mean?" returned the merchant, trying to hide his disgust.

"Why—I was in your place down town to see ye, and ye was not there; and as I came this way I saw carriages driving from your door. I didn't know but ye was giving a party."

"I have just buried my last boy, sir. He died only three days ago."

"Why—I'd no idee that you had a sick——"

"Hold, sir. I have told you the simple fact, and there let it rest. Now to your business, for I feel like being alone."

"I don't blame ye, sir. I don't blame ye at all," said Lattimore; and then, having cast a searching gaze over the large apartment, he added—

"I wouldn't have disturbed ye, here, only there's something turned up I thought ye'd like to know."

"Ah! What is it?"

"Maybe ye know it, already, but I rather concluded ye didn't. Have ye heard of anything very peculiar lately—anything ye didn't expect?"

"No, no. What is it? I have heard of nothing. Let's have it at once, without any further preface."

"Have you heard from Bion Hun—— a—Bion Bernard, I mean? Have you heard from him lately?"

The merchant started to his feet in terror.

"What is it? speak!" he gasped.

"I asked you if you had heard from him lately."

"No. Have you?"

"Yes. He came home in the ship Good News!"

"No, no! You don't mean that, Lattimore. Oho! don't say that!"

"But I tell you it is so," persisted the attorney, emphatically. "He and a sailor-man was saved from the wreck of the Aldebaran, and, after almost any quantity of hair-breadth escapes they have got home."

"*Bion!* Bion come back! O! why did not the sea swallow him?"

"He's here, sir."

"Here! Where?"

"I mean he has returned. But I think he has left the city now. He has made arrangements to sail in the Good News on her next voyage."

Mr. Huntley started across the parlor, and when he came back he was more calm.

"There may be no danger, after all," he said. "Of course the boy would not know me."

"I am not so sure of that," quietly returned the attorney.

"Ha! What have you discovered? How did you know he had come?"

"I'll tell you, sir: Old Black Peggy—the woman who lived with Margery Grutt—came to me this morning and wished me to find her a place to work and live in. I told her if I could find a place I would. She then told me that Margery had broken up, and also said that little Bion had come back. He came with a man named Jack Wallace. She said they had both gone away, but she didn't know where; only she knew they took off the little girl that had been living with Margery so long. You remember the girl—one just about Bion's own age?"

"Yes—I remember her."

"Well. She disappeared on the same night that Bion and his sailor friend left the city; and of course they were sure she went with him. I then went down to the ship, and by a round-about method of inquiry I found that Bion and Wallace were both shipped for the coming voyage. That was all I could learn there, save to find out the name of the hotel at which the two stopped. I then went to the hotel, and there found that Bion Bernard and Jack Wallace were there over a week ago. I asked if they knew where the boy had gone, but they did not—only they knew that he and Wallace, with a little girl, took the Albany stage. I then asked the clerk if the boy seemed to be acquainted with any one in the city. He told me he didn't know; but he remembered that the boy made very particular inquiries for a wealthy merchant, named *Christopher Huntley*. I asked him if the boy seemed to speak as though he was acquainted with Mr. Huntley, at the same time explaining to him that I felt an interest in the lad, and could perhaps find out something about him if Huntley knew him. The clerk said he remembered very distinctly that the boy was much affected while making the inquiries—that he seemed to be very anxious to know all about the merchant. So you can judge from that, sir, whether he remembers you."

"But I can't understand it," said Huntley, with a frightened look and tone. "By the soul of me, but Margery must have told him something!"

"No, no," quickly responded Lattimore, "I know better than that. The boy must have met your name in the paper; or, he may have heard it in connexion with your share of the cargo; and the name may have been familiar to him."

"But why should he seek me?"

"Perhaps in the hope that he might find a friend," answered Lattimore with a meaning look. "At all events, you can see the captain of the Good News. You can question him more appropriately than I can."

At this point Mrs. Huntley entered the parlor, and the attorney started to his feet.

"I'll see you to-morrow," the merchant said.

Barrabas Lattimore bowed and withdrew.

"Who is that man?" the wife asked, after the attorney had gone.

"He is a lawyer, my dear, who once did business for me. He has a curious look, but he is a shrewd, intelligent fellow."

"I felt lonesome, my husband. Oh! we are alone now—all alone!"

There was a double blow upon Christopher Huntley's head. He had the death of his last child to mourn for; and he had the continued life of another to frighten him. Nor was this all. From the past came fearful memories to haunt and terrify him!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A PLOT, AND A COUNTERPLOT.

On the morning following the visit of Lattimore to the merchant, the latter called at the attorney's office. He remained for some time, but nothing was elicited further than had been stated on the previous day.

"But," said Huntley, after the subject had been discussed in all its present bearings, "the boy knows me. He remembers my name, and will of course never forget it while he lives; but may always be ready to learn more. In fact, there is no knowing how much he may remember. I wish he was out of my way!"

The two men sat and looked at each other for some moments after this. At length Lattimore said,—

"That would be the safest state of affairs for you, most surely."

"Of course it would. And don't you think it could be done?"

"Yes, sir. It is very easily accomplished.'

"It must be done," resumed the merchant, nervously. "I am not safe. He knows too much. And think how much opportunity there is for him to learn more. How can we do it?"

"How can *we*? *I* have nothing to do with it, sir," returned Lattimore, carefully.

"But suppose I should wish to engage you?" asked Huntley, smothering his chagrin.

"Why—if you should tell me you wanted a desperate piece of work done, I suppose I could recommend you to the man who would do it for you. There is Old Ivory, who took charge of the two negro girls for ye. If you could get the boy once into his house without the outsiders knowing it, he could be taken care of very easily."

"But you will help me in this if I pay you?"

"Perhaps so. But go and see the captain of the ship first. See whether the boy is really going out in her; and when he is expected back. Find out all this, and then you will know how to go at work."

The merchant left and went down to the pier at which the ship lay, where he had the good fortune to find the captain. They went into the cabin, and after the usual civilities had passed, Mr. Huntley asked if there was a boy named Bernard came home in the ship.

"Yes," returned Puffer. "And, by the way," he added, "he knows you, or thinks he does, at any rate."

"Ah—knows me?" uttered the merchant, striving to hide his startled emotions. "Did he say so?"

"Why—no—not exactly. He passed through the cabin one day when you were here—it was the last time you were on board—and when you had gone he came back and asked about you. He seemed rather anxious about it, I thought."

"But what did he say?"

"Well—I don't remember, exactly. I judged more from his looks than I did from what he said, when he spoke particularly about you."

"But what did he say that you can remember?"

"You know the boy, then, do you?" the captain said, looking his visitor sharply in the eye.

"No—n—no, sir. I don't know him; but I have heard of him. I have heard of him, sir; and I thought I'd like to see him. Did he say what he wished to see me for?"

"Why—no. I couldn't make out exactly, as I said before, what he wanted. Only I judged that he had at some time known you."

The merchant rested his elbow upon the table, and then placed his brow upon his open palm. He remained thus for some time. When he looked up there was a sinister expression upon his face which the captain noticed in a moment.

"Captain," the visitor said, speaking very carefully, "do you know anything of this boy's previous life?"

"Do you mean of his earlier childhood?"

"Yes, sir."

"Only that he is an orphan. I never made any particular inquiries."

"How is it—is he a very good hand? Do you think him of much worth to you?"

Captain Puffer did not answer at once. He had been watching his visitor very narrowly, and in this question he thought he saw a dark meaning.

"Why," he answered, after thinking awhile, "he is no better than other boys."

"But have you never noticed that he was dishonest?"

"Dishonest?" repeated Puffer. He came very near speaking indignantly, but he remembered himself, and calmly added,—"I don't know that I ever discovered anything of the kind; but I remember now that he had some peculiar looks and actions about him. Did you ever hear that he was dishonest?"

"O—yes. Were you aware why he first went to sea?—or, rather, why he was sent?"

"No. He seemed silent on that point."

"Well—he was sent to sea on account of his dishonesty. So I have been told."

"I'm sorry to see any youth growing up in that way," said the captain. "But what's once bred in the disposition generally sticks through life."

"You are right, Captain. And I think you had better let Bion Bernard slip. When will he return?"

Puffer had it upon his tongue's end to ask the merchant how he knew that the boy had gone, but he concluded not to. He did not wish to let slip any of his real feelings, for he knew very well that he had a scoundrel to deal with.

"He will return on Tuesday, sir," he answered.

"Next Tuesday?"

"Yes, sir."

"To-day is Friday. You sail in one week from to-day?"

"If we can get our cargo stowed, sir."

"You have your crew, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well—suppose you send this boy, when he returns, to——"

Huntley hesitated.

"Where sir?" asked the captain.

"Never mind. Let him come. Will he come directly to the ship?"

"He may come here first; but he will board at a hotel until we are ready to sail."

"Ah!" cried the merchant, with sudden relief. "At what hotel?"

"At the one from which the Albany stages start."

"Ah—thank you—thank you, sir. You need not say anything to him that I have called. You will keep it to yourself."

"I shall be very careful, sir."

"Thank you. Good day, sir. I have business to attend to, or I would stop longer. Good day, sir."

Captain Puffer said, "Good day," and Christopher Huntley took his leave.

"There goes a precious villain!" muttered the captain to himself, as his visitor departed. "But, my dear sir, I'll make some inquiries concerning you."

Puffer went on deck, and having seen that the stevedore would do all that should be done, he turned up into the town. He was acquainted with many of the heavy importing merchants, and also with several smaller houses, having been engaged in the East India trade for over twenty years as commander of a ship. The first house he visited was that of *Narrowgimp & Makepenny*. Both the owners were in their counting room, and Narrowgimp was in his chair, with his feet upon the rim of the stove, and a newspaper in his hand.

"I declare, Makepenny," said the senior partner, looking up from his paper, "Christopher Huntley has just buried another child. He has the luck of burying children, don't he?"

"He does, surely," returned Makepenny. "He seems to have a strange turn that way. I don't see—Eh? Who's this? Why—Captain Puffer, as I'm a sinner! Alexander Puffer my boy how are you?"

The three shook hands all around, and then seated themselves and went into the news.

"Let's see," said Makepenny, after chatting awhile, "you brought goods for Huntley?"

"Yes. He owns part of the ship," returned Puffer.

"And you own a part?"

"Yes. I own one half."

"Ah, yes. We were just speaking of Christopher Huntley as you came in. He has buried his last child—the third one since he was married."

"Aye," added Narrowgimp; "and there's quite a little coincidence touching the affair. I have sat in this identical chair, before this identical stove, and read the accounts of four deaths in Huntley's family, besides one notice of a boy that was expected to die."

"*Four?*" queried Puffer. "I thought you said *three.*"

"Ah—three children of his own. But don't you know how Huntley stepped into his wealth?"

"No—I never heard," replied the captain, much pleased at thus having the subject fully broached without any effort on his part. "What is it?"

"Ah—he was a lucky dog. But I'll tell you: Huntley had a wealthy brother who went to China on business. Before going he settled up all his business, and left something like two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the care of his wife. After he had gone the wife was taken sick, and the doctors told her she must come North."

"But where did she live before? Where was her home?" asked Puffer.

"O—ah—I forgot. They lived in New Orleans. But, as I was saying, the wife was very sick, and came on here with her child. She boarded here through the summer, and sometime in the early part of the fall she died. She left her child—a boy—with Christopher, who happened to be here, and also left a request that he might be appointed guardian of the child. After the mother was buried Christopher went to New Orleans and took out the necessary papers, and then sold off what real estate there was, and gathered up all the money and came back. Before a great while the boy was taken sick and he died; and this left Christopher Huntley heir to the whole property, as he was the only known relative living. That's the way he came to be rich."

"Do you remember what the boy's name was?" the captain asked.

"Let's see:—I read it—— By—— Byron—*Byron*—that sounds like it."

"No—'twas BION," said Makepenny.

"O—yes—BION. That's it. That was his name, BION HUNTLEY."

"Did the boy die where his mother did?"

"No. Christopher moved him off. I guess he found the board too high there.—At any rate, he went somewhere and hired rooms and kept them himself."

"Do you remember the Christian names of the boy's parents?"

"Yes—I did know them. They were published. I know the father's name was GIDEON."

"And the mother's name was BELINDA," interposed Mr. Makepenny.

"O, yes—that's it. Makepenny's got a great faculty of remembering female names."

Captain Puffer concluded to ask no more questions. He had learned all he wished to know; and having chatted a few moments more he arose and took his leave.

The captain had heard much concerning Huntley's moroseness and gloominess, and he had noticed somewhat of it himself; and now he thoroughly understood it. Oh! he knew all now! He had heard Bion's story, and now that he had heard this last one he could put them together and make quite a clear case of it. It was too plain to admit of a doubt,—so plain that he felt as sure of it as he could have felt of anything beyond the ken of his own vision. And he knew very well what Christopher Huntley wanted of the boy, too.

For a long time Puffer pondered upon the matter to the exclusion of everything else from his mind. His first impulse was to inform Bion of what he had heard, and then help him work it out. But, upon more careful reflection, he concluded that such would not be the wisest course.

"If I tell Bion, now, it will make him very uneasy to begin with," he said to himself, as he paced to and fro in his cabin. "If I could be here to take care of him—or if I could find some one in whom he might realize the care of a father—it would do to tell him. But as it is I think he had better not know it. He is young, and alone. His enemy is old, and has help. Should I tell him all that I know he and Jack would be sure to see Huntley; and it could only end in evil to Bion. I could not bring any legal proof at present, and must sail before I should have time to hunt it up."

Awhile longer the commander paced his cabin floor, and at length he resumed, with an emphatic clap of his hands—

"The boy will be better off to grow a leetle older as he is. He'll make a better man if he's brought up to depend upon himself. He has nearly six thousand dollars now, and if he puts it in a place of safety he will have something to commence life on at any rate. No, no,—he's better off as he is. He is far too young to enter the lists against that old villain of an uncle; and will be happy enough if he remains ignorant of the wrong that has been done him."

As this matter was thus settled the captain went on deck and looked to the stowing of his cargo, which was being put on board as fast as possible. He had been by the hatchway some ten or fifteen minutes when some one touched him on the arm. He turned, and found an old woman—a red-faced, red-haired, hard-featured, large-framed woman, who asked him if he was captain of the ship.

"Yes, ma'am," he answered.

She wanted to speak with him alone a moment. He went aft to the taffrail, and she followed.

"I'm in a hurry, sir; an' I'll let ye off in a mighty small bit o' time. My name's Margery Grutt. I fetched Bion Bernard up from a leetle bit of a boy. I'm goin' away from this great city. I'm goin' off into the country. When Bion comes back I want ye to tell him I'm gone. Tell him to be a good boy, and remember that Margery loved him. Tell him I know he took Cora away, and that I'm glad he did it. I'm glad he did it! I know she'll be better off. You'll tell him all this, sir; and then tell him I hope I may see him once more afore I die. I will see him if I can. Ye'll tell him this, sir; and then tell him—tell him—(the woman cast her eyes carefully about her, and lowering her voice)—tell him to *keep clear of Christopher Huntley!* You'll tell him all this, sir."

"But—stay one moment, my good woman," cried the captain, as Margery turned to leave.

"No, sir. I've told ye all I want ye to tell Bion, and I've got no more to tell."

"But I want to ask you a question. You spoke of Mr. Huntley——"

"Aye—and I said all I can say," quickly replied the woman. "For Bion's sake I told ye that; and I wouldn't a' told it to ye if I hadn't a took ye for a man of honor. Surely ye wouldn't make me feel sorry I'd trusted ye. I mayn't tell you my reasons, but I will tell ye 'at I've said all. Only this one thing more: If Bion Bernard sails——"

"*Bion Huntley*, you mean!" interrupted Puffer.

——"in your ship, sir," continued Margery, without so much as showing that she had heard him speak, "you'll find an honest, noble boy. Good bye, sir."

And with this Margery Grutt turned and strode from the deck. The captain watched her until she had passed from sight, and then commenced to pace to and fro across the poop.

"Well, well," he finally said to himself, "it all tends towards one point. Christopher Huntley is a villain, and if I live, the world shall know it!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

A CLUE TO CONJUGAL HAPPINESS.

Peace is an essential element of the conjugal state, and its chief support and promoter is reciprocal kindness. The woman rules instinctively by her gentle affections; she possesses a thousand shades and delicacies of which men are incapable; and, therefore, to her kindness is indispensable. The man, with much larger physical and mental faculties, finding in woman an excess of feeling, is naturally attracted towards her, as supplying him with that which nature, for its wise purposes, has denied to him. The result is, that each has a dependence on the other, and it becomes their duty to render this condition of their union as little irksome and as consoling and cheering as possible. To effect this great object it should, long ere the bloom has deepened on the young wife's cheek, be indelibly impressed on both their memories that kindness is the great bond between man and wife—the mighty fructifying power that can,

"With magic art,
Control the latent fibres of the heart."

They must begin their wedded life with a knowledge of this indispensable necessity; and, with so firm a foundation on which to build hopes and wishes, that they may then safely undertake the task of examining their position in relation to each other.

THE LEGS OF INSECTS.

M. Delisle once observed a fly, only as large as a grain of sand, which ran three inches in half a second, and in that space made the enormous number of *five hundred and forty steps.* If a man were to be able to walk as fast in proportion to his size, supposing his step to measure two feet, he would, in the course of a minute, have run upwards of *twenty miles*, a task far surpassing our express railroad engines, or the famous Seven League Boots recorded in the nursery fable. In leaping, also, insects far excel man, or any other animal whatever. The flea can leap two hundred times its own length; so also can the locust. If a man were six feet long, and could leap as high and as far as one of these insects, he might stand near the Custom House, leap up into the air over the top of Trinity Church spire, and alight in Greenwich street; which would be something more wonderful than it has ever entered into the minds of the writers of fairy tales to conceive of. The insect called the froghopper can leap more than two hundred and fifty times its own length. Some spiders can leap a couple of feet upon their prey.

A CURIOUS SCENE.

At Lyons a curious scene recently occurred at the theatre during the performance of "*La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires.*" A gentleman in the pit, having mounted on one of the benches, demanded a moment's attention. Dead silence immediately prevailed, whereon the speaker asked if Mr. B. were in the theatre. The person thus addressed came forward in the boxes, and was informed, in the same tone, that his mother, whom he had left in health, was expiring from cholera, and entreated her son to return without delay. This announcement of "the king of terrors," in the midst of enjoyment, produced an indescribable effect, and the theatre was soon empty.

COURTING IN SPAIN.

Should you have occasion after nightfall to traverse the dimly lighted streets, you will not go far without brushing past a figure muffled in an ample cloak, and with the sombrero slouched over the eyes, leaning against the iron bars. As you pass, your ears inform you that it is conversing in a low voice with some one within, whom the darkness shrouds from observation. In all probability you will take no further note of the whispering pair; but if you be more curious than wise, and bestow on them more than a passing look, another becloaked figure will probably step out from some corner, and politely request you to refrain from interfering with other people's business. If this hint be not sufficient, he will prepare to enforce it by other means, and, by displaying his navaja, threaten to appeal to arms. He is engaged in one of the most sacred duties of Spanish friendship. To guard from danger or discovery—or, as it is termed, "*guardar les espaldas*," "to guard the back" of a friend who may be playing the lover—is an office to be undertaken only by a tried comrade, whose devotion and courage may be proof against the rude trials to which such a position subjects him. If the fair one be noted for her attractions, then there are rivals to be encountered, whose jealous passions, if aroused by witnessing another thus engaged, nothing would so soon appease as a thrust of the knife, given, as may be supposed, without much regard to the rules of fair play. Under these circumstances, the second is summoned by the principal to stand, like the knight of old, ready to do battle against all comers, should they approach with hostile intentions. I need not add, that these nocturnal meetings are a frequent occasion of brawls, and that lives are sometimes lost, and usually dangerous wounds given and received, when the knife is brought into play. This custom, though more prevalent among the lower classes, is not entirely banished from the upper ranks of society. In truth, the mystery and romance attending it have too many charms for Spanish lovers of every degree ever to permit it to become the exclusive usage of any one rank in life. It is far more congenial to his temperament to throw a veil of secrecy over his attachment, which not unfrequently from the first wears a certain air of romance. On the alameda he encounters some dark-eyed beauty, whose glance fires all the susceptible nature of his southern bosom. To follow her footsteps when the gay throng disperses—to linger in the narrow street where her home is—and, by one of those mute but expressive sighs known in southern climes, to testify his passion to her as she sits at the balcony that commands a full view of the moving world in the street—or to convey a message by some Mercury familiar with such errands—are the usual steps that precede an interview. This, however, let it not be imagined is to be sought amidst the shady alleys of the alameda. No; the fair ones of Spain are too jealously guarded by mammas and duennas ever to know much of the pleasures of solitude, far less to enjoy them with a companion. But when gates are barred, and the household wrapped in sleep, it is then that the Spanish maid rises to keep her tryst with her lover.

HANG-DOG LOOKS.

There is a certain monotony and family likeness in the criminal countenance, which is at once repulsive and interesting; repulsive from its rugged outlines, its brutal expression its physical deformity; interesting from the mere fact of that commonness of outward character; the expression, and the structure, and style of features being so unnaturally alike as to suggest that there must be a common cause at work to produce upon these features so remarkable a result. What is this cause? Is it mere habit of life? Intellectual pursuits, it is well known, affect the character, even the material form of the face: why not criminal pursuits? No person can be long in the habit of seeing masses of criminals together without being struck with the sameness of their appearance. Ugliness has some intimate connection with crime. No doubt the excitement, the danger, the ultimate penalties and excesses attached to the career of the criminal make him ugly. A handsome face is a thing rarely seen in a prison, and never in a person who has been a law-breaker from childhood. Well-formed heads—round and massive, denoting intellectual power—may be seen occasionally in the gaol; but a pleasing, well-formed face never. What does this ugliness of the prison population indicate? This:—That the habit of crime becomes in a few years a fixed organism, which finds expression even in the external form. And is not such a fact full of morals? Does not every one feel how important it is—in the interests of society, in the interests of the criminal himself—that he should be dealt with in the earliest stage of his career, before the evil that is in him has had time to fix itself in the organization, to grow fast in the ever-hardening granite?

SQUEEZING THE HAND.

It is but lately that we understood the strange constructions that are sometimes put upon a squeeze of the hand. With some it is entirely equivalent to a declaration of love; this is very surprising indeed. We must take hold of a lady's hand like hot potatoes; afraid of giving a squeeze lest we should burn her fingers. Very fine, truly!—Now it was our ancient custom to squeeze every hand that we got in our clutches, especially a fair one. Is it not a wonder that we have never been sued for a breach of promise? We would not give a rusty nail for one of your cold, formal shakes of the hand. Every person who intrudes one or two fingers for your touch (as if he were afraid of catching a distemper) should go to school awhile to a jolly old farmer. He shakes you with a vengeance; and shakes your body too, unless you should happen to be as thick as himself. Well, there is nothing like it; it shows a good heart at any rate, and we would rather a man would crush the very bones of our fingers, and shake our shoulder out of joint, than that he should poke our paw, as if he were about to come in contact with a bear or a hyena. The ladies may rest assured of this: that a man who will not squeeze their hand when he gets hold of it, does not deserve to have a hand in his possession; and that he has a heart 749 times smaller than a grain of mustard-seed.

MEDICAL MEN IN TURKEY.

The so-called *barbarous* government of the Sublime Porte actually pay their medical men. The duty of those who thus receive salaries from the State is to visit both the rich and the poor, or to receive them at their own abodes; they are to accept no fees from the poor, and are punished if they confine their practice to the rich. Every three months they are obliged to furnish to the constituted authority certain statistic accounts of the number of their patients, the nature of their cases, and the results of the treatment; the history of epidemics, and the observed meteorological phenomena. The regulations concerning interments without the city are such as ought to put to shame nations who are given to boast of their civilization.

AT LAST.

BY ALICE CARY.

Come and kiss his icy brow,
Kiss his lips, and kiss his face,
Death has brought him nearer now—
You may come, and take your place!

Think of all his wasted years
Made for your sake darkly dim,
Now he cannot see your tears,
'Tis your right to weep for him.

With a soft and tender light,
From his chamber, gloom beguile;
Make his bed up sweet and white,
He will sleep a long, long while.

Earth was too unkind, too full
Of cold envies, for your past;
Death was friendly, pitiful,
He is yours, all yours, at last.

MARGUERITE.

BY MARY W. STANLY GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

"To be ordered here, there, and everywhere, as if I was a schoolboy—to be thwarted and advised and checked, no matter what I undertake to do—and now, to be ordered down into the country, just at this time—and on such a fool's errand, too! I'll be blessed if I do it!"

"Eh—what's the matter, my dear fellow?" said a cheery voice at the door. Turning round, Arthur Stone saw his boon friend and companion, Etherton Saunders, who had just returned from his bridal tour to Europe.

"Ethie—my dear old boy—welcome home again!"

They shook hands most energetically, and the cloud on Arthur's fine face vanished in sunshine.

"And how is Mrs. Saunders?" he asked, as Etherton threw himself down in an easy chair, and lit his cigar.

"Julia—oh, she is well, I believe. I haven't seen her to-day, though. She doesn't rise very early when she is tired, and when I left the house she was still asleep—so her maid told me."

Arthur Stone followed with his eyes the clouds of cigar smoke that his friend was puffing into the air, and looked thoughtful.

"What now?" asked Etherton, giving him a playful pinch. "What are you thinking about that makes you so sober."

"Will you answer me a serious question seriously—Etherton?"

"Two, if you like."

"Two it shall be then. Are you as happy with Julia as when you first married her—and do you love her as well?"

"Deuce take that cigar—I've burnt my mouth with it!" was the irrelevant reply. "Arthur pass the box."

He did so. And waited till a fresh cigar was selected, and lit.

"Now, then."

"Well, my boy," said Saunders, with a little sigh—"all men are liable to disappointments in this life, you know."

"Yes."

"Mine may not be the worst, still——"

"Still you *are* disappointed, Ethie?"

"Yes. I would not say as much to anybody but you, Arthur."

"Thank you for that." The two friends looked at each other very kindly, and shook hands.

"I suppose no one ever realized his best and sweetest dreams," Etherton Saunders went on to say. "Years ago, Arthur, when I was a college boy, I was engaged to a simple little country girl—a sweet little maiden, with brown hair and large loving gray eyes. She was a pearl, Arthur—I didn't know it then, but I have found it out now—and she had the name of the pearl-Marguerite! My memory of her is the sweetest of my life—God bless her!"

He smoked in silence, and his eye looked dim.

"Well," said Arthur, eagerly.

"It was *not* 'well,' Arthur. As I grew up, I fancied my little country maiden was hardly ambitious enough for me. I knew she was poor. I grew hard, and proud, and cold, and she saw the change. She had the dignity of a queen, and our engagement was at once ended. I tried to congratulate myself when I was free. I fell in love with belle after belle—and at last I married, as you know, one of the most beautiful and brilliant of them all. She is a belle still, Arthur—that tells everything. I am no longer the lover, but the husband. Well, we shall win through it someway, I dare say."

"And Marguerite."

"What a sweet name it is! Marguerite, I am told, is now a beautiful girl. She is an heiress, too—and highly educated and accomplished. I should not care to see her now—she is like all the rest of her sex, no doubt. But of the Marguerite of my youth—my daisy—my pearl—ah, Arthur, you little know what thoughts I sometimes have of her."

He threw his cigar away, and leaned his head upon his hand.

"Arthur—whatever you do—never marry a fashionable woman."

"I never will! Yet it is just what I am importuned to do at present."

"By whom?"

"My uncle—General Stone—who has picked up some paragon or other of a cousin of mine at a watering place, and orders me down there to marry her. I hate marriages between cousins—and I wont go."

"Did you ever have a cousin, Tom?
Did your cousin happen to sing?
Sisters we have by the dozen, Tom,
But a cousin's a different thing!"

sang Etherton, with a wicked smile.

"Don't laugh—but just hear what the old fellow says."

"My young friend is rich—beautiful—intellectual, amiable, and kind. If you don't come down here and marry her, at once, you dog, I'll cut you off with a shilling. She isn't spoken for yet—but there's no knowing how soon she will be. Come down here at once—I shall expect you Tuesday, by the five o'clock train. One word more—she's terribly afraid of being married for her money—so look out and not mention that. You have enough of your own, and when I die—you will have more—so where's the use of your doing it. Her cousin—a young lady from the South is here with her. My dear boy—I shall expect you Tuesday, and I know you wont fail, Your old Uncle, NED STONE."

"There's a pretty specimen of diplomacy for you!" exclaimed Saunders, when he had finished reading. "The old General would never make a Talleyrand, I see plainly. But, though clumsily and roughly set, Arthur, you may depend upon it, it is a man-trap still."

"I know it," was the rueful reply. "What would you advise me to do?"

"Keep out of it."

"But how?"

"Write to him that you have an attack of cholera or hydrophobia, and can't come."

"And have him posting here in the next express train to look after me! No—that will never do. I suppose I must go down this afternoon, and he will marry me to his paragon in spite of my teeth. I am the most helpless dog in the hands of womankind, Etherton, and I am fully persuaded that if she makes up her mind to have me—I shall yield at once."

"So am I," said his friend. "But I have one bright idea—your uncle says she is afraid of being married for her money. Now, if you could contrive to make her think you were after that—instead of her—how would that work—eh?"

"My dear boy—you have saved me! I'll do it so effectually that she will send me packing at once."

"That will do, then. No—don't thank me any more. You remember Æsop's fable of the fox who got into the trap and lost his tail? We used to read it at school."

"Yes. And he tried to persuade all the rest to have their tails cut off—alleging that it was the fashion."

"Exactly. Well, Arthur, I have nothing of the fox about me. It may be the fashion for men to be disappointed and befooled as I have been—I dare say it is. But, however that may be—it is a fashion I don't want you to follow, my dear fellow—and so, take my advice—and act upon it."

"I will, you may depend upon it. But, Etherton, is there nothing that can make you and Julia happier?"

The young merchant shrugged his shoulders and smiled scornfully.

"Don't waste any sympathy on her, Arthur—while she has her diamonds, her carriage, her opera box, &c., she is contented. Six feet of earth will cure the pain at *my* heart—nothing less."

"I am sorry," Arthur began, but his friend cut him short with—

"Pshaw—there is no need of it. Go down into the country and enjoy yourself—don't let them entrap you before you know it—do you hear—and write to me often—will you?"

"Yes."

"Good-bye, then. One word more: Arthur, if ever, in your wanderings, you chance upon a woman as fair and good and pure as the Marguerite of my boyhood was, set yourself to work and win her heart nobly and honorably, and keep it when it is won, like the greatest treasure (as it will be) you have on earth. If you find her, marry her, if she wills it, and you will be happy."

"I will, Etherton."

"Now, good-bye, my dear boy. God bless you!"

He wrung his hand, and Arthur saw tears standin his dark eyes. Were they brought there by the mention of his lost love?

"I wish I could speak some comfort to you, Ethie," he said, sadly, "But I don't know what to say."

"For the best of reasons, Arthur—there is nothing to be said. There are no words that can console me. But, for God's sake, take warning by me, Arthur, and never strike upon the rock where I am shipwrecked!"

He was gone, and Arthur sat soberly in the seat he had just vacated, thinking of him, and the fair Marguerite, whose name had power to influence and move the man of the world even then.

At seven o'clock that evening he alighted at the gate of his uncle's residence. The old general met him at the door, gave him an eager welcome, and hurried him off to make his toilet.

"Given you your old room, you see," he said, as the servant brought up his nephew's valise, and left the apartment again. "The girls are waiting down stairs, so hurry up, and we'll all have tea. You're a good boy for coming so soon—and as for Addie—if she don't take a fancy to you, I'll disinherit her."

"But, uncle—what are their names? You said there were two."

"Miss Adaline manners and Marguerite Clifton."

"Miss Adaline Manners! The heiress, I suppose."

"Eh—she's well worth the winning," said the general, with a droll smile. "I'll leave you now to dress—but don't be long about it. You'll find us in the old summer parlor, and tea is waiting."

He bustled out of the room, rubbing his hands, and chuckling to himself, and Arthur hurried his toilet, strangely confounding "Marguerite Clifton" and the "Marguerite" of Etherton Saunders, in his thoughts. He took a last look at himself in the toilet glass, as he turned to leave the room. His simple dress of black, only relieved by a white vest, and the light guard chain of his watch, was in perfect good taste—his six feet of stature—his noble, thoughtful face—his deep blue eyes, and luxuriant hair, beard and moustache of a sunny hue, might well have won him favor in a lady's eye—yet he seemed dissatisfied with his appearance, and turned away impatiently, and went down stairs.

At the door of the parlor he paused. His uncle was reclining comfortably on the sofa, while a fairy like little creature, with a roguish face, and flaxen ringlets, was leaning over him, and trimming his snow white beard with blush roses. Her dress was rich and elegant—a diamond ring sparkled on her small, white hand—a diamond bracelet on her round arm.

"The heiress, doubtless," said Arthur to himself. As he stepped over the threshold of the door, her unclouded blue eyes were raised to his, and the work of decoration was suspended.

"What is it, Puss?" The old general sprang to his feet, when he saw his nephew, presenting a most singular spectacle with the red roses clinging in his beard.

"Some of our foolery," he said, coloring a little, as he saw the smile in Arthur's eyes. "Miss Addie Manners—this is my nephew, Mr. Arthur Stone, of whom I have told you so often. Shake hands, and make friends with him at once, and don't go to being saucy or cool."

Thus admonished, the young lady held out her hand, with a pretty smile.

"I trust we shall not quarrel, Cousin Arthur."

She had the most musical of voices, and the most engaging little ways imaginable. Had Arthur been a more impressible man, he would have fallen in love with her on the spot. As it was, he preserved his composure admirably, though he bent low over the little hand, and touched his lips lightly to it.

"There is my pledge of amity," he said, with a smile.

"Bravo!" cried the general.

"I'm sorry I can't return it, Cousin Arthur," said the saucy little beauty. "But you must take the will for the deed."

"Dare I?"

She laughed, blushed, and turned away.

"Come, Arthur, don't be nonsensical," said the general, quietly. "Here is another cousin I would like to introduce you to, when you can find time."

He stepped out on the piazza, followed by Arthur and Miss Manners. At the farther end of the porch, a young lady, dressed simply in black silk, sat drawing.

"Marguerite—I have brought your Cousin Arthur to see you," was the somewhat unceremonious announcement of the general.

She rose, showing a tall, graceful, slender figure, and held out her hand.

"My cousin Arthur is very welcome."

"And I am most happy to greet my cousin Marguerite."

He did not kiss her hand—he held it a moment, and then relinquished it. She looked up at him, and the unmeaning compliments he had at his tongue's end, were checked. She had straight and regular features—a serious—perhaps a proud face—a clear, dark, colorless complexion, such as we sometimes see in creoles, crimson lips, and the blackest hair he had ever seen. She looked noble—she seemed like a queen—yet it was a queen discrowned, for there was a deep sadness in the large, dark, gray eyes, fringed with long, black lashes. Those "bonny wells of eyes." They haunted him with their single glance. And the lines of the English poet came quickly to his mind—

"Oh sweet, pale Marguerite—
Oh rare, pale Marguerite—
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?

More human in your moods
Than your twin-sister, Adaline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touched with a somewhat darker hue—
And less aerially blue,
But ever trembling through the dew
Of dainty—woful sympathies."

"Come to supper?" shouted the general, from the parlor. And starting from his reverie, with a blush, as he saw the laughing, blue eyes of Addie fixed upon him, Arthur handed his cousins in, and laid sentiment aside, as he sat down to the tempting tea table.

CHAPTER II.

It was evidently expected of Arthur that he should devote himself to the young heiress. The General was constantly coupling their names together in jesting allusions. Miss Clifton seemed to avoid them, and the fair Addie herself, was always dancing up beside him, and monopolizing his time and attention with mischievous pertinacity.

He was in no danger from her. He thought her pretty, good and pleasant, but he would as soon have thought of falling in love with a wax doll. She was made to charm the eye and win the heart of a graver man than himself. His nature was gay and cheerful like her own; but while he laughed, and frolicked, and jested with her, day after day, his eyes often wandered toward the stately form of Marguerite, or studied her calm face like a page of some new and interesting book.

He rarely found an opportunity to speak with her alone. One morning, however, coming down early, he saw her in the garden, and joined her. She was dressed in a plain blouse and straw hat—with long gardening gloves on her hands. Yet even thus equipped she looked and moved every inch a queen.

She answered his morning salutation, gave him a delicate brier rose he asked for, and went quietly on with her work.

"Shall I help you?" he asked, at last.

"I think not," was the low reply. "I have nearly finished."

"You had better let me help. You little know what a gardener I am. My friend Etherton Saunders (my dearest friend, Miss Clifton, and one of the noblest fellows living), used to say that it was my vocation—that nature designed me for that and nothing else. Where is the spade?"

"Here, beside me." As she pointed to it Arthur noticed that her hand trembled and she looked very pale.

"You are tired. Let me finish this for you."

"No—no—I have set my heart upon doing this myself," she answered, working with feverish haste. "Spade up that other bed, if you wish, Cousin Arthur, but don't touch this. Who did you say called you a gardener? I hardly think he was a very good judge."

"Oh, you mistake. Etherton Saunders understands everything. You should know him, Cousin Marguerite—I wish you did."

"And why?"

"Because, I believe you might convince him that true worth and glory have not yet quite departed from your sex."

She blushed deeply, and her dark gray eyes were fixed a moment on his face with a strange look.

"Thank you for the compliment. But does your friend rate us all very low?"

"He has reason to," burst out Arthur, whose heart was still sore on the score of Etherton's unhappiness. "His wife is a mere fashionable doll and does not love him. He cannot find rest for heart, or brain, or soul in the fashionable whirlpool of society, or the elegant house he calls his home. From my very soul I pity him."

"So do I," she answered, with startling emphasis. "But it is a doctrine of mine that all our unhappiness in this world is the result of some wrong-doing. Is there nothing in your friend's past life for which it is right he should suffer now?"

Arthur blushed.

"Miss Clifton, I am sorry to say, there is. He loved a young girl years ago, and deserted her, because she was poor, and he was very ambitious. Her name was Marguerite—like yours;—I think she must have been like you."

"Hardly, I think," said Miss Clifton, throwing down her little garden-rake and smiling up at Arthur. "But does he remember her yet?"

"He does. As a man remembers all that has been most dear—all that he has lost forever—with tears and broken words of regret—as I may one day remember Marguerite also."

He had taken her hand, but he could not see her face. As he finished speaking, however, a bright tear fell down upon his own hand, and, freeing herself from his grasp, she went quickly toward the house.

He did not see her again till evening; and then she was cold, quiet and reserved. Yet, when he thought of the tear that had fallen from those magnificent eyes, he could not quite despair.

On the last evening of the week he sauntered out into the garden alone. His uncle was reading the evening paper—Addie was playing with her pet kitten—Marguerite was—he knew not where. Yet he would have given much to know; and, as he passed the bed of violets where they had stood on that well-remembered morning, he stooped down and picked some and put them in his breast.

"Ethie's Marguerite could never have been fairer, or purer, or nobler," he thought to himself. "And, if she would but give me the chance, I would tell her how dear I hold her."

"Asleep—or in a brown study—Cousin Arthur," said a low voice behind him, and turning he saw her at his elbow.

"Marguerite, are you very busy?"

"Not just at present."

"Give me five minutes of your time, then. I have something I want to say to you very much."

She let him lead her to the arbor at the further end of the garden and seat her, but she bit her lip and seemed nervous and ill at ease. He threw himself at her feet, and looked up in her half-averted face.

"Marguerite, you know why my uncle sent for me?"

"I have guessed something of it."

"Because Addie is rich he wants me to marry her. I cannot do it. I never can marry any woman I do not love, even if her gold would fill a palace."

"You are very right there, I suppose," said his cousin, stripping the leaves from the grape-vine beside her.

"So my friend Etherton told me."

"What did he say?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes—if you will."

"He told me of his lost Marguerite, and bade me, if I ever found a woman as good, and fair, and pure as she, to win her, if I could, and keep her love as the most sacred thing on earth. With her for my wife I could not fail to be happy."

Both were silent for a time.

"Marguerite," he continued, "I have found that woman. She bears the same name—she has the same face I always imagined Etherton's Marguerite had. I would win her for my own if I dared to; I would ask to be admitted into that pure heart and cherished there;—but words fail me, Marguerite; tell me what I shall say to move that heart to compassion."

She was looking at him now, and the light of love was shining in her serious dark gray eyes.

"Stop one moment, Arthur," she said, in an unsteady voice. "If she should tell you that another had been admitted there before you—if she should confess that she had loved before, and that not lightly, but with the whole force of her nature—what should you say then?"

A sudden light flashed on the young man's mind. He remembered her agitation that morning when he first mentioned Etherton's name, and the tear that fell upon his hand.

"You were *his* Marguerite!" he said, sadly.

She bowed her head.

"Then I am answered. Once having loved a man like him, you could never have a thought of me. I have been a fool—but you will forgive me, dear Marguerite."

She did not answer. Over her averted face a rosy blush was stealing, and he could not make her eyes meet his.

"Marguerite, Marguerite," he said, with hope and fear. "Dare I hope? Can it be possible that you have forgotten him—and that you love me?"

"I have forgotten him, and I love you," said the clear, low voice.

"Marguerite, my own Marguerite!"

He clasped her to his heart, and she did not reprove him; he kissed her, and his kiss was returned. Breathless, giddy, and blind, he sat down beside her, and leaned his head upon her shoulder.

"You have driven me wild with happiness, Marguerite," he murmured.

"And yet I have deceived you in one thing," she answered, as she bent fondly over him. "I wanted to see and judge you for myself, unnoticed, and I made my cousin Adaline play the part of the heiress, while I kept in the back ground. You loved the poor cousin, though, at once, and I can be my proper self again."

"But you are really Marguerite Clifton? You have not changed your name with your part?"

"Always Marguerite Clifton to you, Arthur."

"Nay, not always Marguerite *Clifton*, I hope," he said, with a smile that made her blush, and drop her head upon his breast.

He drew the proud head nearer, with a fond content. What was it to him that she had lands and gold, so that she was his, by her own free will and consent? He sighed once when he thought of Etherton, and the news he should have to break to him; but love is all engrossing, and with the next whisper of his beautiful betrothed, the cheerless destiny of his friend was for awhile forgotten.

The general was in his glory. It had been the darling dream of his heart to see his favorite nephew the husband of Marguerite, and when that young gentleman informed him of the probability of its fulfillment, his exultation knew no bounds.

"Didn't want to marry an heiress, hey?" he exclaimed, giving Arthur a sly poke in the ribs. "Thought you'd show your pluck, and marry a poor girl? Didn't think your old uncle knew which side his bread, or yours, was buttered? What do you think now, sir? And what amends are you going to make Miss Addie here, for having broken her heart into fifty pieces, while you were flirting with her so prodigiously? By the Lord Harry! it's the funniest way I ever heard—to court one woman through another. When I was a young man, Addie, we did things differently, and if I had wanted your cousin Marguerite, I should have told her so the first thing, and not taken you for the blind, Pussy!"

Miss Addie shook her flaxen curls disdainfully.

"No love lost, uncle," she affirmed. "I didn't want Arthur any more than he wanted me. If you don't believe me, look here," and she unfastened a small locket from her neck, and held it out towards him.

"What's this, Midget? A lock of your kitten's hair?"

"No," was the pettish reply. "It's my intended husband's picture."

The dignified announcement was received with a shout of laughter from her uncle and Arthur. Even Marguerite could not repress a smile.

"Set him to playing cat's cradle, Midget, when he comes," said her uncle, leading her away, "or blindman's-buff; but, at your peril, do you let me catch you making love yet awhile. Do you hear, Miss? 'The picture of my intended husband!' Oh, that's a good one, for a little tow-headed girl that I rocked in her cradle the other day!" and, as Addie brushed by him in offended dignity, he threw himself back in his chair and laughed till the house rang again.

Preparations for the wedding went merrily on. Arthur had written to Etherton, inviting him—though he felt assured he would not come. But at the last moment, on his wedding night, and when some of the guests had already assembled, a note was given him by a servant from his friend. It ran thus:

"I am within five moments' walk of you, and shall see you married. My wife is not with me. She has an infant daughter only three weeks old, from whose unconscious influence I hope great things. God bless you, my boy. Since Marguerite was lost to me, long years ago, I am glad that you have found her. And as you deal with her, so may God deal with you! ETHERTON."

He showed it to Marguerite.

She read it to the end, gave it back to him, and kissed him.

"You have no regrets, love?" he asked.

"Not one."

They went down the stairs together, and entered the summer parlor. A white-haired clergyman, who had baptized Arthur in his infancy, rose up as they advanced, and the group around him drew back. A few low words, a simple prayer, a heartfelt blessing, and the two were made one for life.

And Etherton. Where was he?

As the crowd thronged around to offer their congratulations, a tall, handsome man stepped up and grasped Arthur's hand. It was he. But, even in those few weeks, he looked changed, and seemed happier and calmer.

"Marguerite," he said, in a low voice, as she looked around, "is all forgiven?"

"All, and forgotten also," she said, with a beautiful smile.

He sighed—a look of pain flashed across his face as her familiar voice fell upon his ear.

"God bless you both!" he murmured, hoarsely.

He bent down—his lips touched those of Marguerite once again, and with a thousand memories of the past in his heart, he exchanged a hasty farewell with Arthur, and hurried from the room. Marguerite looked after him and sighed.

"Not one regret even yet," said Arthur, bending over her.

"Not one—believe me—except for him," was the earnest answer. "But I do hope and pray he may be happy—as we are!"

"Amen!" murmured her husband.

Vain hope! Before they returned from their bridal tour, the papers were ringing with his name. His heartless, giddy wife, had profited by his brief absence to flee, with her child, from his house, under the protection of a man, who had long been her professed admirer—and the injured husband returned to find a cold hearthstone, and a desolated home. With all his evil passions thoroughly aroused, he followed on their track—shot the seducer in a duel—rescued his child, and, leaving the false wife to spend her days in a foreign court, came back to America once more. There, after long and anxious delay, he wrote once more to Arthur—now a sober, marrried man.

"I am glad you are happy. With Marguerite you could not be otherwise, for the woman has nobly redeemed the promise of the girl.

"My home is not quite desolate yet. A little blue-eyed fairy dances all day long, throughout the house, and welcomes me gleefully, whenever I enter. She loves her father with her whole heart—and he is trying to make himself more worthy of that innocent affection. My child may save me yet—who knows? I have named her 'Marguerite,' and my daily prayer is, that she may resemble, in all things, her namesake. Yours, always, ETHERTON."

BEN EBER'S VISION.

BY GEORGIANA HERBERT.

Ben Eber slept, and in his sleep he had a vision of the pit, and of the lake of fire.

Among the ones who suffered there, he saw a man who—more than all others—moved his pity. This miserable being was bound by mighty cords to a monster made of canker-worms and fire; and from the flames darted a myriad poisoned fangs, which were constantly being thrust into the man's flesh. These fangs were hooked; and as they were withdrawn they brought with them all the interior fibres of their victim. Bleeding and quivering heartstrings, bare nerves and cords, hung shrinkingly down upon the outside of that agonized body, and were scorched and withered (but never destroyed) by that horrid flame; while all the time the canker-worms kept gnawing—gnawing—at them, and at the heart of him from whom they had been drawn. His shrieks, and groans, and curses, his writhings and struggles were most appalling; and ever and anon the awful fiend said, in low tones, that made the flesh of Ben Eber creep with loathing:—

"Keep thyself calm; *be happy*; give not way to such foolish excitements—they injure thee."

Shaking with mortal terror, dying from intensity of compassion, Ben Eber cried out:—

"Oh! miserable man! What could he do to merit such a doom? It were too hard even for a murderer."

"Yes," said Ben Eber's guide, "we never deliver a *murderer* to the power of *that* demon,—yet he hath many victims. He multiplieth himself into innumerable demons, and he dealeth fiendishly with all who are given for his portion."

"Who *are* they that are his portion?" asked the trembling Eber, rapidly glancing back along the line of his own sins.

"They are those who, like yonder wretch, while on earth took into their hands a human heart, and, after breathing softly upon it and carressing it until it expanded in their clasp, did then, with calm, unpitying eye, and cool, steady, practised hand, draw out, and leave quivering upon the surface, every nerve and fibre of that delicate and sensitive thing; then, smiling at the sight, looked on while the rude forces of the world, armed by their cruel skill with ten-fold power, trod rough-shod over it; who listened, then, unmoved and smiling, to the groans, the cries and pleadings of the helpless, bleeding victims of their infernal deed, saying, softly, with rare refinement of mockery:—

"'Keep thyself *calm*, oh, Heart!—*be happy*—give not way to such foolish excitements—they injure thee.'

"*Here* they receive their just dues—they are what thou seest. Return to the earth; and beware that thou merit not such torture."

And Ben Eber awoke from his dream,—"which was not *all* a dream."

PHILOSOPHY OF FEAR.

It was said by Raleigh, when some of his friends lamented his confinement under a sentence of death, which he knew not how soon he might suffer, that the world itself was only a larger prison, out of which some were every day selected for execution. That there is a time when every man is struck with the sense of this awful truth, we do not doubt; and, perhaps, a hasty speculatist would conclude that its influence would be stronger in proportion as it more frequently occurred; but upon every mind that is become familiar with calamity, calamity loses its force; and misery grows less only by its continuance, because those who have long suffered lose their sensibility.

If he who lies down at night in the vigor and health of five-and-twenty, should rise in the morning with the infirmities of four-score, it is not improbable that he would sink under a sense of his condition; regret of enjoyments which could never return, would preclude all that remained, and the last mournful effects of decay would be hastened and aggravated by anticipation. But those who have been enfeebled by degrees, who have been shaken ten years by the palsey, or crippled by the gout, frequently totter about upon their crutches with an air of waggish jocularity, are always ready to entertain their company with a jest, meet their acquaintance with a toothless grin, and are the first to toast a young beauty when they can scarce lift the glass to their lips. Even criminals, who knew that in the morning they were to die, have often slept in the night; though very few of those who have been committed for a capital offence, which they knew would be easily proved, have slept the first night after they were confined. Danger so sudden and so imminent alarms, confounds and terrifies; but after a time stupor supplies the want of fortitude; and as the evil approaches, it is in effect less terrible, except in the moment when it arrives; and then, indeed, it is common to lament that insensibility, which before perhaps was voluntarily increased by drunkenness or dissipation; by solitary intemperance, or tumultuous company.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

MOON ON THE SEA.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

I saw the youngling moon look meekly forth,
While the hoarse floods prolong'd their vesper hymn,
Touching the forehead of a far, gray isle
With silver radiance, delicately dim.

But arching high, in majesty and wrath,
And closer shutting o'er her gentle head,
Portending evil for her future path,
A sable cloud, its gathering blackness spread;

Yet still, adherent to the infant queen,
Fast by her side, with cheek serenely pale,
A tender, lonely, pure-eyed star was seen,
Like Abdiel faithful, tho' all else should fail:

And hark!—that voice upon the summer air,
Who hath one constant friend, the darkest cloud may dare.

WATCH-HILL, R. I., AUG. 25, 1857.

THE

SHOEMAKER'S DAUGHTER;

OR,

CASTE IN LACEYVILLE.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

Leonor Hastings and Arthur Lacey were the children of neighbors—neighbors so far as vicinage was concerned, but not in the sense of kindliness of feeling and deed. General Lacey was the village magnate—the founder of Laceyville, with stores, and factories, and dwellings, in his possession, and a fine, large stone house, with ample and elegantly arranged grounds, for his residence. Tribby—short for Tribulation—Tribby Hastings was the Laceyville shoemaker, and the little, brown, clapboarded cottage, beneath whose roof he dwelt, adjoined General Lacey's gardens. Into these gardens the windows of the little brown cottage looked; and Tribby was wont to say that he had quite as much benefit of them as their proprietor. The rich perfume of the flowers floated through his low rooms—the hum of the bees came soft and murmuringly to his ears on downy summer afternoons—the songs of the birds from out of the depths of General Lacey's trees, were as sweet to the poor shoemaker, who at times played a lively accompaniment upon the lapstone, as to the rich man, who took not half the pleasure in them that he did in counting the number of his acres, and estimating the value of his bank stock.

Tribby's wife was not half as philosophical as her husband. She was a feeble little woman, sickly and sentimental, and greatly addicted to tea-drinking and novel reading. Leonor was her only child, and her somewhat uncommon name was drawn from the pages of the last novel which her mother read previous to the period of her christening. Tribby, who was of right old Puritan stock, and had a hereditary hankering after Puritan names, would fain have bestowed upon the child his mother's appellation of Patience. The ill-assorted pair came near having their first and only quarrel over this disputed point, but Tribby, finally, in compassion to his wife's feeble health, announced his acquiescence in her wishes. Whether he made a mental reservation at the time is not known, but certain it is that when he presented the babe for baptism, having first whispered in the clergyman's ear, she was baptised by the name of Leonor Patience.

Mrs. Hastings stormed until she was exhausted, after their return home, but she was forced to acquiesce. The deed was done, and the name uttered by the venerable pastor, as the baptismal waters fell from his hands upon the brow of the babe, both Tribby and his wife were too orthodox even to dream of changing. So Leonor Patience she was called, and the mother often congratulated herself upon the fact that the despised second name need seldom be written or spoken, while the initial might be supposed to belong to some high-sounding and romantic appellation.

Arthur Lacey was six years older than Leonor, and he, too, was an only child. The advent of a baby in the little brown cottage was an era in the life of the lonely boy. Every day saw him beside her cradle in infancy—it was his hand that guided her first tottering footsteps, and his coming elicited the most joyous shouts of her infant glee. She had learned to laugh and clap her little dimple hands at sight of him long before she could utter his name.

Arthur loaded his little pet with the beautiful toys with which his mother so bountifully provided him, and he twined in her dark curls the choicest flowers from his father's garden. Together they played hide-and-go-seek in its fragrant alleys and flowery parterres; together, as Leonor became old enough, they went to the village school and the village church, Arthur leading his little friend, in summer, along the shadiest paths; and in winter, in the best beaten paths, or drawing her, as was his dearest delight, upon his sled.

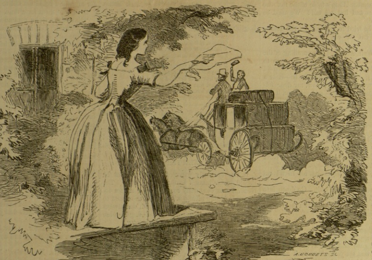
Those were very happy days to the innocent little ones whom no thought of caste or station disturbed. Arthur borrowed no dignity from his father's acres and dollars. Leonor was as beautiful and graceful as if hers sat upon the judge's bench, instead of the cobbler's. General Lacey, absorbed in business, and his gentle wife, in the cares of her large household, gave not a thought to the childish companion of their son; while Tribby—unworldly Tribby, whose only pride was in his little daughter's beauty and daily developing grace, thought she was a fit companion for the highest in the land; and his invalid wife, while dreaming over the pages of some flashy novel, saw visions of the future greatness which that beauty was to win. And so, day by day, the hearts of the two children were knit together in a bond stronger than could ever have united them had they been members of the same household.

But the time came when they were to be separated. The separation was unexpected, and was a violent and fearful wrench that left torn and bleeding fibres in each heart. Both felt as if the world had grown suddenly dark—as if there were no longer beauty, nor joy, nor music, nor any lovely thing.

General Lacey, on one of his frequent journeys, had accidentally been informed of a school where the sons of divers great men of his political party and descendants of the aristocracy of the State were receiving their education. He decided that this was precisely the institution which he had long desired to find for his son, though the truth was he had never thought of the matter before, and, with his usual promptness, he traveled out of his way a few hours, and made arrangements for Arthur's early admission.

On General Lacey's return his will was made known, and, after a few busy days—after sorrowful and lingering farewells to his mother and his darling little playmate, to whom he entrusted the care of all his most cherished pets, Arthur was put into the stage-coach, with numerous trunks, containing an outfit worthy the son and heir of the magnate of Laceyville, and whirled away towards his destination. Leonor, mounted upon the steps of the porch, which sheltered the door of the little brown cottage, saw, through the mist of tears, the rattling vehicle which contained her life-long companion swinging and creaking along the village street.

When she became convinced that he was really gone she fled to her little room, in the roof of the brown cottage, and threw herself upon her bed in an agony of childish grief, as real, perhaps, and as heart-rending as the sorrows of maturer years. Her meals, her play, and her books, were neglected during a few miserable days, and then her mother on awaking one morning found Leonor, for the first time in her life, really ill. The child had fretted herself into a fever—a slow, lingering disease, which did not yield to the tenderest nursing until the cool breezes of autumn came to give vigor to the exhausted frame. But her step was slow, and her face grave for a long time, in spite of her mother's querulous remonstrances and Tribby's constant efforts to furnish his darling with amusement. It was not until the return of Arthur, for his first vacation, that the old smile, the merry laugh, and the bounding step returned; and little Leonor was "herself again."



But it is not with the childish days of Leonor and Arthur that we have to do. Of course the intimacy of childhood was never fully renewed after the first parting. But nothing could utterly separate the two who had grown in such a loving union.

Arthur's absences were many and long-continued, and while he was acquiring an excellent education at the best institution of learning, Leonor had only the tuition of the district school, and a little aid kindly bestowed by Miss Ray, the pastor's niece, in the ornamental branches which she would otherwise have had no opportunity of learning.

Nevertheless, "she grew in beauty," and Arthur was sure, each time he returned, that he loved her far more than when they parted—that she was more loveable, more bewitching. And so it continued until Arthur grew to manhood, and, at length, having passed through all the phases of his educational career, came home to Laceyville and took possession of his old room in the family mansion; while upon the door-post of a pretty white office on the main street of the village was nailed the sign of "Arthur Lacey, Attorney and Counsellor."

Mrs. Hastings was decidedly a very happy woman when these arrangements had been completed. Visions of a wedding in which Leonor, in the traditional "orange flowers and satin" of her favorite volumes, should figure as bride—while Arthur Lacey should be the fond and happy bridegroom, continually floated before her eyes. To Tribby—honest, simple-minded Tribby, her flights of romance had always been incomprehensible—now he did not pretend to understand her. He hammered away at his lapstone, and plied his awl as composedly as if he had not a lovely daughter of sixteen, and sat in his porch at evening in his shirt-sleeves, smoking his clay-pipe just as he had done before that "shingle" had appeared upon the white office. Twenty times a day, Mrs. Hastings declared in the vexation of her spirit that "never was woman tied to so stupid a husband, or one so determined to stand in his own light, and ruin the prospects of his child."

Meanwhile it did not appear that the young lawyer was greatly disturbed by Tribby's lap-stone, or *seances en dishabille* upon the porch. He came and went with much of the freedom of the old time, often stealing away from a parlor-full of Laceyville fair ones (who had quite recently discovered Mrs. Lacey to be the "dearest old lady," whom it was delightful to visit) to sit by Leonor's side, reading the books which she loved to hear for the reader's sake, perhaps, more than their own; or chatting gaily of the olden times.

Mrs. Hastings's manœuvres were as little heeded, as her good husband's utter simplicity. Leonor had seemed to belong to him from her childhood—that she was to be his wife, one day, he never doubted, more than he doubted that he loved her infinitely more than all beside which the whole world contained. So Mrs. Hastings, who was looking for a proposal in form, and expecting to see the young couple fall at her feet, and crave her blessing after the fashion of the love-makers of her favorite novels, was doomed to continual disappointment. And this disappointment so worked upon her that she led poor Tribby a terrible life, making his pillow one of thorns, and garnishing his meals with tears and doleful bewailings.

Whether this state of mind so affected her feeble frame as to produce mortal illness, or whether the "time appointed for her to die," had arrived without immediate cause, cannot be known. But Mrs. Hastings suddenly sickened, and after a few days of anxiety and suffering she breathed her life out calmly. They laid her beneath the green sod of the village burial-place, and when the slow, tolling bell had ceased its vibrations she was forgotten by all but her husband and child.

Tribulation Hastings then for the first time in his peaceful life did not belie his name. He mourned for his nerveless, helpless wife with an abiding sorrow, missing her presence in the low-roofed cottage, at the head of his table, and in the church-pew, as much as if she had been the loveliest lady of the land, instead of a querulous invalid who would, long since, have harrassed the life out of a man less constitutionally placid. Leonor was now his sole hope and comfort.

But Leonor, also, was a sincere mourner. We often wonder when we behold the grief that follows the departure of those who have been unlovely in their lives, and are astonished that those who have borne most from their faults and frailties in life, should seem sincerely to mourn their loss. But we forget the power of habit, and that constant association often makes annoyances matters of course, and blunts the sensitiveness which they at first wounded.

It was Arthur's task to comfort the motherless girl, and then, for the first time, he framed into words the hopes and desires of years—that had long since grown into the settled purpose of manhood. Leonor had nothing to oppose to his pleadings, except the loneliness of her father who demanded her society and care; for, to spend her life with Arthur, who had been her best beloved from infancy, was the greatest happiness which she was capable of comprehending. So, to have seen another come between her and the hopes his words awakened, would have been her greatest sorrow.

Of course there was no chance of disapproval from Tribby, for whatever would make Leonor happy he most desired. But when Arthur ventured to lay his plans before his parents he was met by the sternest opposition, the harder to bear, inasmuch as it was totally unexpected, for no restrictions had ever been laid upon his association with the playmate of his childhood, even after she had grown up into the loveliest girl in all Laceyville.

To a more worldly nature this opposition would have seemed quite natural, and would have been met by a vigorous preparation for consequences. General Lacey was very rich, and his only son might claim a wife from among the daughters of wealth and luxury. They had never looked upon his attachment to Leonor Hastings as likely to culminate in marriage—she was his pet, his plaything—a pretty little girl, of a station so much beneath his own as to render the idea of making her his wife one too improbable to deserve a moment's anxiety.

General Lacey stormed and fumed, and Mrs. Lacey wept and besought. But Arthur was inexorable. His choice was made—wealth and station were worthless gauds, while the beauty and grace of Leonor and her loving heart were priceless to the young lover.

In the midst of the stormy conversation that followed the first avowal of his hopes, Leonor's voice, warbling a song that he had taught her, was heard. Looking out the open glass door of the library he saw Leonor approach the window of the little brown house, directly opposite, from which she leaned, as, carolling the song which seemed the fittest expression of the joy of her heart, she decked the cage of her pet canary, hanging there, with a garland of leaves and flowers.

A very beautiful picture she made, in the gauzy mourning dress that set off the exquisite purity of her complexion, as she stood there, framed in the small casement. Arthur drew his parents to his side and bade them look upon the fair, graceful girl whom he desired to present to them as a daughter. Both acknowledged her loveliness and worth, but both equally shrunk from the thought of mating their son—wealthy, distinguished, handsome—to the daughter of the village cobbler, Tribby Hastings. The old man's appearance, at that moment, behind his daughter, upon whom he bestowed a caress—patting her roseate cheek with his horny, blackened hand—quite removed any wavering that her beauty might have caused. Could they ever acknowledge the poor shoemaker as the father-in-law of Arthur Lacey?

A week elapsed, during which the General and Mrs. Lacey had tried their powers of persuasion upon the parties principally concerned, but in vain. Mrs. Lacey had remonstrated with Leonor, and the general had tried to bribe Tribby to leave the village, and go with his daughter to reside in a distant town, where a fine house and garden should be his own, on condition of keeping Leonor quite out of the knowledge of Arthur Lacey. But both father and daughter were obstinate. Leonor loved Arthur too well to yield when his happiness, as well as her own, was at stake; and the old man loved his child, and loved the tiny house where so many years of his life had been spent, and was equally proof against threats and persuasions.

The old man had grown strangely feeble since the death of his wife, and though Arthur urged immediate marriage, confidant, in his youthful inexperience, that his profession, even if his father's assistance were withdrawn, would afford him ample means of support. Leonor felt that duty required her presence by her father's side and in his home. She resisted all entreaties, therefore, to leave him, both for his sake, and because she would not be the means of destroying Arthur's prospects. And it was finally arranged that he should embark for Europe to carry out a long-talked-of plan of travel. All agreed that in the two years of his purposed absence many changes must occur. The general and Mrs. Lacey hoped their son might forget Leonor in gazing into the eyes of some proud European beauty, or outgrow his youthful penchant in his commerce with the great world. Arthur and Leonor hoped that the years of absence might soften the proud hearts that stood in the way of their happiness; and Tribby meekly added his desires to theirs, and thought, without a shudder, that long ere Arthur's return he might be laid to rest beside his wife in the church-yard, and thus one obstacle to his child's peace be forever removed.

Arthur went, leaving sorrowful hearts to lament the very absence they had planned. Amid his tossings upon the ocean, as he walked the quaint thoroughfares of foreign cities, or sat with strangers at the festive board, one image dwelt forever in his mind—a lovely, tearful face—dark eyes dim with long weeping, rosy lips trembling with repressed emotion, that with a lover's privilege he had kissed in the sad parting hour, a bending figure with grace in every curving line—well might it remain fixed upon his memory, for, among all the beautiful ladies who smiled upon the handsome young traveler, there was not one to compare with Leonor, the shoemaker's daughter.

Meanwhile changes were occurring in his home, and among those he loved. Tribby Hastings had laid aside the awl and lapstone forever. He had died, as peacefully and as quietly as he had lived, and had been buried and forgotten by all but Leonor. She, poor child, had left the little cottage and gone to be a nursery governess in a rich city family, who had passed the previous summer in Laceyville. All Laceyville had forgotten her, too, except those who congratulated themselves that she was probably forever removed from the sphere of Arthur Lacey. If there were changes in the Lacey mansion nobody discovered them outside its charmed walls.

The old story of the youthful loves of the millionaire's son and the shoemaker's daughter were almost forgotten as the years passed on, and still Arthur Lacey lingered among the "storied fanes" of other lands. Six years he had been absent, before his return was mentioned.

At length letters came announcing his speedy arrival upon the shores of the New World. And Mrs. Lacey smiled proudly as she added, in her conversations with her friends, that Arthur would bring with him a wife—the daughter of a wealthy American family, whom he had met at Florence the preceding winter. The family, she said, would accompany the young bride to her new home until their own could be arranged in the city of ——, where they were to reside in future.

There was a season of anxious waiting and busy preparation, and the bridal party came. Mrs. Lacey met them with eyes so dimmed by tears that only the noble figure of her son caught her sight. It was not until the whole party had been ushered into the drawing-room that she found leisure to turn to the bride and her parents.

Then Arthur proudly led forward the beautiful woman, who had quietly awaited the cessation of the maternal raptures, and Mrs. Lacey clasped in her arms—Leonor Hastings.

"Leonor!" burst from her lips—it was all she could say in her blank amazement.

"But not Leonor Hastings," said Mr. Clement. "My adopted daughter, Leonor Clement, now the wife of Arthur Lacey—the best of daughters, and worthy of the love and name of even your own noble son. You will not, Mrs. Lacey, refuse her a place in your mother's heart."

"My daughter," was all the agitated woman could utter, and then she resigned her to the welcomes of General Lacey, too wily a diplomatist, if not too truly a gentleman, to mar the scene by even the semblance of disappointment.

And so, after all, Arthur Lacey and Leonor Hastings were made one, and all Laceyville, looking on that evening, as they drove slowly onward towards the green old churchyard where Tribulation Hastings and his wife slept their last sleep, said Amen.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HELVELLYN.—The "penny weddings" which prevail in many parts of Scotland, are so called because the bride and bridegroom being unable personally to pay the expenses of the wedding invite their friends and acquaintances to be present at the ceremony, and charge each a small entrance fee. Thus the parties present, although guests, pay for the entertainments of the evening. Any reputable person wishing to attend, on paying the stipulated sum, will be sure to receive a hearty welcome. The fee is usually regulated by the current price of whiskey, and varies considerably. Sometimes as many as eight hundred persons are present at one of these "penny weddings," and the profits to the married couple, after paying all expenses, have often amounted to upwards of a hundred and fifty dollars. The people of this country would do well to take a hint from the Scotch, in this respect. It is far better for a couple to make one hundred and fifty dollars by their wedding than to impoverish themselves by attempting to *give* an entertainment.

MISS CANADA WEST wishes to know if it is wrong for a young lady who is "heart whole and fancy free" to correspond, in a friendly way, with several young gentlemen, and if any of said gentlemen would have any claim upon her affection and hand simply because he had thus corresponded with her; and adds that she hopes we will at once answer these questions, "as many people wish to know." We think that it is not wrong for a young lady to correspond in a friendly way with her male friends; we also think that none of her correspondents could base any valid claim upon her affection or hand by virtue of such communications. But may not "Miss Canada West" have used such endearing phrases and infused such a spirit into her letters as would justify an ardent young man in believing that something more than a mere friendly interchange of gossip was intended?

WEST POINT.—A new-comer at the Military Academy complains that the older cadets are constantly playing tricks upon the freshmen, such as carrying them, while asleep, out doors and leaving them lying in the open air, &c., &c.; and wishes us to "say something about it." All we have to say is, that a cadet who will whine over such matters had better return to his mamma and give up the idea of being a soldier. We detest snivelers wherever they are found. Let the "New-comer" at West Point enter heartily into the sports of the institution; and when he "wakes up in the open air," let him balance the account by helping to "carry out" at least two of his sleeping comrades.

MADELINE.—The extract is as follows:—

"Oh, had the monster seen those lily hands
Tremble, like aspen leaves, upon a lute,
And made the silken strings delight to kiss them,
He would not then have touched them for his life."

This beautiful description occurs in the last scene of the second act of "Titus Andronicus," a play assigned to Shakespeare by tradition, but the prevailing impression now is, that he only revised it, scattering gems like the one we have quoted, as he proceeded with his labors.

HARRY.—The British won the battle of Bunker's Hill. They drove the Americans from the field; but the latter made such prodigious slaughter in the ranks of their foes, and lost so few of their own men, that the *moral* victory rested with the undisciplined Yankees. As to the relative bravery of British and American soldiers, there is no difference. Both are utterly brave and enduring, and cannot be beaten by an equal force of any other troops in the world.

HOLOFERNES.—You are very indiscreet, (not to use a harsher term,) thus to set your father at defiance. No good can result to you from such a course. Besides, we are inclined to the opinion, after analyzing your statement, that *you* are the one who is to blame, and we think that if you would calmly consider the whole matter, you would come to the same conclusion, and at once harmonize the discords by asking your father's forgiveness.

WILLIAM R. wishes to know if he should go into a store where there is a U. S. mail box, and give them a letter and three cents to pay the postage, and they should say they had no stamps, but only stamped envelopes at four cents each, and he should leave the letter and three cents, if the storekeeper would not be bound to send the letter? No. It is *your* business to stamp your letter, and nobody else is obliged to do it for you.

MODESTY.—It is certainly proper to look any person with whom you are conversing, in the eye, and no one is obnoxious to the charge of immodesty for doing so.

MANY CORRESPONDENTS have earnestly requested information as to dentrifices for preserving, cleansing and beautifying the teeth, and we now give ample information on the subject. In the first place, the ingredients employed should not be too hard or gritty, lest they injure the enamel of the teeth; nor should they be too soft or adhesive, for in that case they would adhere to the gums and be disagreeable. Finely powdered pumice stone is one of those substances that act entirely by mechanical attrition, and is hence an objectionable ingredient, in tooth-powder intended for daily use. It is, however, generally to be found in the various advertised dentrifices; which are remarked for their rapid action in whitening the teeth. Finely powdered Bath brick is another substance of a similar nature to pumice, and, like that article, should only be occasionlly employed. Cuttle-fish bone, coral, and prepared chalk, are also commonly used for the same purpose, but the latter is rather too soft and absorbent to form the sole ingredient of a tooth powder. Charcoal acts partly mechanically and partly by its chemical properties of destroying foul smells and arresting putrefaction. For this purpose it should be newly burnt and kept in well-closed vessels, as by exposure to the air, it rapidly loses its antiseptic powers. Powdered rhatany, chinchona bark, and catechu are used as astringents, and are very useful in foulness and sponginess of the gums. Myrrh and mastic are employed on account of their presumed preservative action. Sulphate of potash and cream of tartar are often used, because of the grittiness of their powders and their slight solubility in water. Phosphate of soda and common salt are often employed, and possess the advantage of being readily removed from the mouth by means of a little water. Among those substances that chemically decolor and remove unpleasant odors are charcoal and the chlorides of lime and soda. The two latter may be used by brushing the teeth with water to which a little of their solutions have been added. A very weak solution of chloride of lime is commonly employed by smokers to remove the odor and color imparted by tobacco to the teeth. The juice of the common strawberry is an elegant natural dentrifice, as it readily dissolves the tartarous incrustations on the teeth, and imparts an agreeable odor to the breath.

A WIDOW LADY wishes to marry a man to whom she is much attached, but is restrained from doing so by the fact that her husband, while on his death-bed, requested her never to marry again. As she wishes us to give our views upon the case, we will say that we do not consider her under any obligation to comply with the foolish request which her husband made during his last illness. There is, of course, and we hope ever will be, a peculiar sacredness attached to *proper* and *reasonable* requests made and wishes expressed on the bed of death; but not even the gravity of such a condition should be permitted to give any binding power to improper and unreasonable desires and commands. The request which our correspondent's husband made of her was unreasonable, and therefore should not be allowed to follow her like a specter and hang as an incubus upon her whole future life. A man who truly loves his wife, and has a magnanimous heart, would not attempt to fetter her whole life by death-bed exhibitions of selfishness; and a man who does *not* truly love his wife, and has *not* a magnanimous heart, is not entitled to have his selfish attempts at imposition respected or tolerated.

DAVID RENSSALAER.—Confound differences between the heads of families! they keep many young hearts unnaturally asunder. Here is the case of a young man, evidently intelligent and respectable, who entertains a warm regard for a pretty and amiable girl, who does not frown upon his suit, and yet he cannot approach her, owing to the obstinate folly of the old people. We are not acquainted with the particulars of the quarrel, but we dare venture to assert, that if circumstances were dispassionately explained, it would be found to be about as important as the dispute which Touchstone had with a courtier about the cut of his beard; so ridiculous do people make themselves about the veriest trifles. Our advice to the young gentleman is, to pour his soft tale into his lady-love's ears, and trust to the chapter of accidents for a happy result. Parents, when the happiness of their children is at stake, begin to be more rational in their prejudices; and our correspondent, by pursuing a judicious and delicate line of conduct, may be the means of effecting a happy reconciliation between two long-estranged families.

OLIVE.—You are a witty girl, and we are glad we can gratify you in regard to the poem, which runs as follows:

"She never smiles—no happy thought
Lights up her pensive eye;
The merry laugh from lip to lip,
Passes unheeded by.
Frozen forever in her heart
The sparkling font of gladness;
And o'er her pours in rapid flood,
The ebon wave of sadness.

She never smiles—has frowning grief
With his stern magic bound her?
Has care his long, lean finger raised,
To cast his fetters round her?
Has one so young the lesson learnt
That love is oft betrayed?
Ah, no. She never smiles, because—
Her front teeth are decayed!

W. T. B.—Of course marriage is indispensable to civilization, and with a few individual exceptions the value of the institution is universally recognized. Paley defines the public uses of marriage as, "1. The protection and comfort of women. 2. The production of the greatest number of healthy children, their better education, and their provision for life. 3. The peace of society, by assigning one woman to one man. 4. The better government of society, by distributing the community into families, and thus appointing over each the authority of the master of a family. 5. The security which the state receives for the good conduct of its citizens, from their solicitude for the welfare of their children, and their being confined to permanent habitations. 6. The encouragement of industry.

NERO.—You have chosen an appropriate signature. Why should you insist upon the lady making her own wedding-cake? It is not customary; and as the lady is better acquainted with the etiquette than yourself, leave the affair entirely in her hands, and confine your attention to what properly concerns you. As to its being "unlucky," for her not to do it, we cannot decide; but it strikes us that your unreasonable request may tend, by creating a difference of opinion in the outset, to sow a few thorns upon the rosy path upon which young people should enter with harmonious opinions and sentiments. You had better say no more about the matter, and should banish such trifles from your consideration altogether.

VICTORIA.—The black spots on your nose are produced by what medical men call polypus. The cause of the appearance is this: your skin is coarse; and the ducts being large, collect the perspiration, which hardens and blackens, and hence the common supposition of their being maggots or grubs in the skin. The remedy is simple. Clean the parts affected by squeezing out the substance that is lodged, and then use a lotion of diluted spirits of wine several times a day, until the blotches have disappeared.

ALEXANDER.—There is no opportunity in this country for those who have military genius to display it in a dazzling manner. Any one who thirsts for military glory will have to seek it in the armies of the Old World, or else get up an expedition, on his own hook, to conquer China or some such country.

SAMUEL D.—Warts on the hands, or elsewhere, may be removed by the daily use of a little nitrate of silver, or nitric or acetic acid. The warts must be previously moistened with water, then dried, and the nitric or acetic acid applied by means of a strip of wood, or a rod of glass.

INQUIRER.—In addressing a lady whom you know not whether she is married or single, it is proper to use the term "Madam;" if you know her to be unmarried, and know that she knows you know it, it would be best not to apply that word to her, as it might give her offence.

NED HAWSEN.—We are not learned as to mermaids. We never saw one; nor did we ever see a man or woman that ever saw a man or woman who had seen a mermaid. We have no objection, however, to any one's believing in such creatures, if they wont bore us about it.

R. P. S.—You cannot buy a commission in the United States Army. In the British Army, a cornet's commission in a regiment of dragoons would cost about four thousand dollars. An ensign's commission in an infantry regiment would cost about two thousand dollars.

A "NEGLECTED ONE."—Thank Heaven that you are neglected. It would be delicious to us if we could be "let entirely alone," for a season. Don't mope. Pluck up courage and spirits and show the world you can do without its aid or guidance.

L. D. M.—The concern to which you refer is in a precarious condition. You will probably have to whistle for your investment. Such things are no better than swindles. In the present state of the libel law, we do not care to be more precise.

A YOUNG ASPIRANT.—Your "poetry" will not command the price you set upon it, nor any other sum. Poetry, unless of a superior order, will not readily find purchasers, and you had far better turn your attention to some more profitable pursuit.

A JEWELER.—Your nervous attacks may be cured by a moderate indulgence of all the appetites, and some healthful exercise. Persons of sedentary habits should eat and drink sparingly, and, above all, avoid the use of ardent spirits.

CONSTANT READER.—The only way to get rid of superfluous hair is to pluck it out by the roots, as it is said the Indians do their beards.

B. J. E.—We can send you the back numbers of the LEDGER from June 18th, and your subscription can commence at that date, if you wish.

X. X. X.—The back numbers of the LEDGER containing the story of "Karmel, the Scout," will cost forty-eight cents.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*